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From the Library of

Bernard De Voto

THE

PRAIRIE-BIRD.

BY THE HON.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS MURRAY

AUTHOR OF

"TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA."

Ferdinand. Most sure the goddess
On whom these airs attend—
My prime request
Which I do last pronounce is, O you wonder,
If you be maid or no?
Miranda. No wonder, sir,
But certainly a maid.
Ferdinand. My language, Heavens!
Tempest, act i.

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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(FRANKLIN SQUARE.)
1852.

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N143P7

PREFACE.

"I HATE a Preface!" Such will probably be the reader's exclamation on opening this volume. I will, however, pursue the subject a little farther in the form of a dialogue.

Author. "I entirely agree in your dislike of a Preface; for a good book needs none, and a dull book cannot be mended by it."

Reader. "If, then, you coincide in my opinion, why write a Preface? Judging from appearances, your book is long enough without one!"

A. "Do not be too severe; it is precisely because the road which we propose to travel together is of considerable extent, that I wish to warn you at the outset of the nature of the scenery, and the entertainment you are likely to meet with, in order that you may, if these afford you no attraction, turn aside and seek better amusement and occupation elsewhere."

R "That seems plausible enough; yet, how can I be assured that the result will fulfil your promise? I once travelled in a stage-coach, wherein was suspended, for the benefit of passengers, a coloured print of the watering-place which was our destination; it represented a magnificent hotel, with extensive gardens and shrubberies, through the shady walks of which, gayly attired parties were promenading on horseback and on foot. When we arrived, I found myself at a large, square, unsightly inn by the sea-side, where neither flower, shrub, nor tree was to be seen; and on inquiry, I was informed that the print represented the hotel as the proprietor *intended it to be!* Suppose I were to meet with a similar disappointment in my journey with you?"

A. "I can at least offer you this comfort; that whereas you could not have got out of the stage half way on the road without much inconvenience, you can easily lay down the book whenever you find it becoming tedious; if you seek for amusement only, you probably will be disappointed, because one of my chief aims has been to afford you correct information respecting the habits, condition, and character of the North American Indians and those bordering on their territory. I have introduced, also, several incidents founded on actual occurrences; and some of them, as well as of the characters, are sketched from personal observation."

R. "Indeed! you are then the individual who resided with the Pawnees, and published, a few years since, your Travels in North America. I suppose we may expect in this volume a sort of *pot-pourri*, composed of all the notes, anecdotes, and observations which you could not conveniently squeeze into your former book?"

A. (*looking rather foolish*). "Although the terms in which you have worded your conjecture are not the most flattering, I own that it is not altogether without foundation; nevertheless, gentle reader—"

R. "Spare your epithets of endearment; or, at least, reserve them until I have satisfied myself that I can reply in a similar strain."

A. "Nay, it is too churlish to censure a harmless courtesy that has been adopted even by the greatest dramatists and novelists from the time of Shakspeare to the present day."

R. "It may be so; permit me, however, to request, in the words of one of those dramatists to whom you refer, that you will be so obliging as to

> 'Forbear the prologue,
> And let me know the substance of thy tale!'"
> *The Orphan*

THE PRAIRIE-BIRD.

CHAPTER I.

In which the reader will find a sketch of a village in the West, and will be introduced to some of the dramatis personæ.

THERE is, perhaps, no country in the world more favoured, in respect to natural advantages, than the State of Ohio in North America: the soil is of inexhaustible fertility; the climate temperate; the rivers, flowing into Lake Erie to the north, and through the Ohio into the Mississippi to the south-west, are navigable for many hundreds of miles, the forests abound with the finest timber, and even the bowels of the earth pay, in various kinds of mineral, abundant contribution to the general wealth: the southern frontier of the State is bounded by the noble river from which she derives her name, and which obtained from the early French traders and missionaries the well-deserved appellation of "La Belle Rivière."

Towns and cities are now multiplying upon its banks; the axe has laid low vast tracts of its forests; the plough has passed over many thousand acres of the prairies which it fertilized; and crowds of steamboats, laden with goods, manufactures, and passengers from every part of the world, urge their busy way through its waters.

Far different was the appearance and condition of that region at the period when the events detailed in the following narrative occurred. The reader must bear in mind that, at the close of the last century, the vast tracts of forest and prairie now forming the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, were all included in what was then called the North-west Territory: it was still inhabited by numerous bands of Indian tribes, of which the most powerful were the Lenapé or Delawares, the Shawanons, the Miamies, and the Wyandots or Hurons.

Here and there, at favourable positions on the navigable rivers, were trading posts, defended by small forts, to which the Indians brought their skins of bear, deer, bison, and beaver; receiving in exchange, powder, rifles, paint, hatchets, knives, blankets, and other articles, which, although unknown to their forefathers, had become to them, through their intercourse with the whites, numbered among the necessaries of life. But the above-mentioned animals, especially the last two, were already scarce in this region; and the more enterprising of the hunters, Indian as well as white men, made annual excursions to the wild and boundless hunting-ground, westward of the Mississippi.

At the close of the eighteenth century, the villages and settlements on the north bank of the Ohio, being scarce and far apart, were built, *rather for the purpose of trading with the Indians than for agriculture or civilized industry*; and their inhabitants were as bold and hardy, sometimes as wild and lawless, as the red men, with whom they were beginning to dispute the soil.

Numerous quarrels arose between these western settlers and their Indian neighbours; blood was frequently shed, and fierce retaliation ensued, which ended in open hostility. The half-disciplined militia, aided sometimes by regular troops, invaded and burnt the Indian villages; while the red men, seldom able to cope with their enemy in the open field, cut off detached parties, massacred unprotected families, and so swift and indiscriminate was their revenge, that settlements, at some distance from the scene of war, were often aroused at midnight by the unexpected alarm of the war-whoop and the firebrand. There were occasions, however, when the Indians boldly attacked and defeated the troops sent against them; but General Wayne, having taken the command of the western forces (about four years before the commencement of our tale), routed them at the battle of the Miamies with great slaughter; after which many of them went off to the Missaim plains, and those who remained, no more ventured to appear in the field against the United States.

One of the earliest trading posts established in that region was Marietta, a pretty village situated at the mouth of the Muskingum river, where it falls into the Ohio. Even so far back as the year 1799 it boasted a church, several taverns, a strong block-house, serving as a protection against an attack from the Indians, stores for the sale of grocery; and, in short, such a collection of buildings as has, in more than one instance in the western states of America, grown into a city with unexampled rapidity.

This busy and flourishing village had taken the lead, of all others within a hundred miles, in the construction of vessels for the navigation of the Ohio and Mississippi; nay, some of the more enterprising merchants there settled, had actually built, launched, and freighted brigs and schooners of sufficient burthen to brave the seas in the Mexican gulf; and had opened, in their little inland port, a direct trade with the West Indian islands, to which they exported flour, pork, maize, and other articles, their vessels returning laden with fruit, coffee, sugar, and rum.

The largest store in the village, situated in the centre of a row of houses fronting the river, was built of brick, and divided into several compartments, wherein were to be found all the necessaries of life,—all such at least as were called for by the inhabitants of Marietta and its neighbourhood; one of these compartments was crowded with skins and furs from

the North-west, and with clothes, cottons, and woollen stuffs, from England; the second with earthenware, cutlery, mirrors, rifles, stoves, grates, &c.; while in the third, which was certainly the most frequented, were sold flour, tea, sugar, rum, whiskey, gunpowder, spices, cured pork, &c.; and in a deep corner or recess of the latter was a trap-door, not very often opened, but which led to a cellar, wherein was stored a reasonable quantity of Madeira and claret, the quality of which would not have disgraced the best hotel in Philadelphia.

Over this multifarious property on sale, presided David Muir, a bony, long-armed man of about forty-five years of age, whose red, bristly hair, prominent cheek bones, and sharp, sunken gray eyes, would, without the confirming evidence of his broad Scottish accent, have indicated to an experienced observer the country to which he owed his birth. In the duties of his employment, David was well seconded by his helpmate,—a tall, powerful woman, whose features, though strong and masculine, retained the marks of early beauty, and whose voice, when raised in wrath, reached the ears of every individual, even in the farthest compartment of the extensive store above described.

David was a shrewd, enterprising fellow, trustworthy in matters of business, and peaceable enough in temper; though in more than one affray, which had arisen in consequence of some of his customers, whitemen and Indians, having taken on the spot too much of his "fire-water," he had shown that he was not to be affronted with impunity; nevertheless in the presence of Mrs. Christie (so was his spouse called) he was gentle and subdued, never attempting to rebel against an authority which an experience of twenty years had proved to be irresistible; one only child, aged now about eighteen, was the fruit of their marriage; and Jessie Muir was certainly more pleasing in her manners and in her appearance than might have been expected from her parentage; she assisted her mother in cooking, baking, and other domestic duties, and, when not thus engaged, read or worked in a corner of the cotton and silk compartment over which she presided; two lads, engaged at a salary of four dollars a week, to assist in the sale, care, and package of the goods, completed David's establishment, which was perhaps the largest and the best provided that could be found westward of the Alleghany mountains.

It must not be supposed, however, that all this property was his own: it belonged for the most part to Colonel Brandon, a gentleman who resided on his farm, seven or eight miles from the village, and who entrusted David Muir with the entire charge of the stores in Marietta; the accounts of the business were regularly audited by the colonel once every year, and a fair share of the profits as regularly made over to David, whose accuracy and integrity had given much satisfaction to his principal.

Three of the largest trading vessels from the port of Marietta were owned and freighted by Colonel Brandon; the command and management of them being entrusted by him to Edward *Ethelston, a young man who, being* now in his *twenty-eighth year, discharged the* duty of *captain and supercargo with the greatest steadiness, ability, and success.*

As young Ethelston and family will occupy a considerable place in our narrative, it may be as well to detail briefly the circumstances which led to his enjoying so large a share of the colonel's affection and confidence.

About eleven years before the date mentioned as being that of the commencement of our tale, Colonel Brandon, having sold his property in Virginia, had moved to the Northwest Territory, with his wife and his two children, Reginald and Lucy; he had persuaded, at the same time, a Virginian friend, Digby Ethelston, who, like himself, was descended from an ancient royalist family in the mother country, to accompany him in this migration; the feelings, associations, and prejudices of both the friends had been frequently wounded during the war which terminated in the independence of the United States; for not only were both attached by those feelings and associations to the old country, but they had also near connexions resident there, with whom they kept up a friendly intercourse.

It was not, therefore, difficult for Colonel Brandon to persuade his friend to join him in his proposed emigration; the latter who was a widower, and who, like the Colonel, had only two children, was fortunate in having under his roof a sister, who being now past the prime of life, devoted herself entirely to the charge of her brother's household. Aunt Mary (for she was known by no other name) expressed neither aversion nor alarm at the prospect of settling permanently in so remote a region; and the two families moved accordingly, with goods and chattels, to the banks of the Ohio.

The colonel and his friend were both possessed of considerable property, a portion of which they invested in the fur companies, which at that time carried on extensive traffic in the north-west territory; they also acquired from the United States government large tracts of land at no great distance from Marietta, upon which each selected an agreeable site for his farm or country-residence.

Their houses were not far apart, and though rudely built at first, they gradually assumed a more comfortable appearance; wings were added, stables enlarged, the gardens and peach-orchards were well fenced, and the adjoining farm-offices amply stocked with horses and cattle.

For two years all went on prosperously; the boys, Edward Ethelston and Reginald Brandon, were as fond of each other as their fathers could desire; the former being three years the senior, and possessed of excellent qualities of head and heart, controlled the ardent and somewhat romantic temper of Reginald; both were at school near Philadelphia; when on a beautiful day in June, Mr. Ethelston and Aunt Mary walked over to pay a visit to Mrs. Brandon, leaving little Evelyn (who was then about eight years old) with her nurse at home; they remained at Colonel Brandon's to dine, and were on the point of returning in the afternoon, when a farm-servant of Mr. Ethelston's rushed into the room where the two gentlemen were sitting alone; he was pale, breathless, and so agitated that he could not utter a syllable: "For heaven's sake, speak! What has happened?" exclaimed Colonel Brandon.

A dreadful pause ensued; at length, he re

ther gasped than *said*, "The Indians!" and buried his face in his hands, as if to shut out some horrid spectacle.

Poor Ethelston's tongue clove to his mouth; the prescient agony of a father overcame him.

"*What* of the Indians, man!" said Colonel Brandon; angrily, "'sblood, we have seen Indians enough hereabout before now;—what the devil have they been at!"

A groan and a shudder was the only reply.

The colonel now lost all patience, and exclaimed, "By heavens, the sight of a red-skin seems to have frightened the fellow out of his senses! I did not know, Ethelston, that you trusted your farm-stock to such a chicken-heart as this!"

Incensed by this taunt the rough lad replied, "Colonel! for all as you be so bold, and have seen, as they say, a bloody field or two, you'd a' been skeared if you'd a' seen *this* job; but as for my being afeared of Ingians in an up and down fight, or in a tree-skrimmage—I don't care who says it—t'aint a fact."

"I believe it, my good fellow," said the Colonel; "but keep us no longer in suspense—say, what has happened!"

"Why you see, Colonel, about an hour ago, Jem and Eliab was at work in the 'baccy-field behind the house, and nurse was out in the big meadow a walkin with Miss Evelyn when I heard a cry as if all the devils had broke loose; in a moment, six or eight painted Ingians with rifles and tomahawks dashed out of the laurel thicket, and murdered poor Jem and Eliab before they could get at their rifles which stood by the *worm* fence;* two of them then went after the nurse and child in the meadow, while the rest broke into the house, which they ransacked and set 'o fire!"

"But my child!" dried the agonized father.

"I fear it's gone too," said the messenger of this dreadful news. "I saw one devil kill and scalp the nurse, and t'other,"—here he paused, awe-struck by the speechless agony of poor Ethelston, who stood with clasped hands and bloodless lips, unable to ask for the few more words which were to complete his despair.

"Speak on, man, let us know the worst;" said the Colonel, at the same time supporting the trembling form of his unhappy friend.

"I seed the tomahawk raised over the sweet child, and I tried to rush out o' my hidin' place to save it, when the flames and the smoke broke out, and I tumbled into the big ditch below the garden, over head in water; by the time I got out and reached the place, the red devils were all gone, and the house, and straw, and barns all in a blaze!"

Poor Ethelston had only heard the first few words—they were enough—his head sunk upon his breast, his whole frame shuddered convulsively; and a rapid succession of inarticulate sounds came from his lips, among which nothing could be distinguished beyond "child," tomahawk," "Evelyn."

It is needless to relate in detail all that followed this painful scene; the bodies of the unfortunate labourers and of the nurse were found; all had been scalped; that of the child was not found; and though Colonel Brandon himself led a band of the most experienced hunters in pursuit, the trail of the savages could not be followed; with their usual wily foresight they had struck off through the forest in different directions, and succeeded in baffling all attempts at discovering either their route or their tribe. messengers were sent to the trading posts at Kaskaskia, Vincennes, and even to Genevieve, and St. Louis, and all returned dispirited by a laborious and fruitless search.

Mr. Ethelston never recovered this calamitous blow; several fits of paralysis, following each other in rapid succession, carried him off within a few months. By his will he appointed a liberal annuity to Aunt Mary, and left the remainder of his property to his son Edward, but entirely under the control and guardianship of Colonel Brandon.

The latter had prevailed upon Aunt Mary and her young nephew to become inmates of his house; where, after the soothing effect of time had softened the bitterness of their grief, they found the comforts, the occupations, the endearments, the social blessings embodied in the word "home." Edward became more fondly attached than ever to his younger companion, Reginald; and Aunt Mary, besides aiding Mrs. Brandon in the education of her daughter, found time to knit, to hem, to cook, to draw, to plant vegetables, to rear flowers, to read, to give medicine to any sick in the neighbourhood, and to comfort all who, like herself, had suffered under the chastising hand of Providence.

Such were the circumstances which (eleven years before the commencement of this narrative) had led to the affectionate and paternal interest which the Colonel felt for the son of his friend, and which was increased by the high and estimable qualities gradually developed in Edward's character. Before proceeding further in our tale, it is necessary to give the reader some insight into the early history of Colonel Brandon himself, and into those occurences in the life of his son Reginald, which throw light upon the events hereafter to be related.

CHAPTER II.

Containing an account of the marriage of Colonel Brandon and its consequences.

George Brandon was the only son of a younger brother, a scion of an ancient and distinguished family: they had been, for the most part, staunch Jacobites, and George's father lost the greater part of his property in a fruitless endeavour to support the ill-timed and ill-conducted expedition of Charles Edward, in 1745.

After this he retired to the Continent and died, leaving to his son little else besides his sword, a few hundred crowns, and an untarnished name. The young man returned to England; and, being agreeable, accomplished and strikingly handsome, was kindly received by some of his relations and their friends.

During one of the visits that he paid at the house of a neighbour in the country, he fell desperately in love with Lucy Shirley, the daughter of the richest squire in the country, a determined Whig, and one who hated a Jaco-

*It may be necessary to inform some of our English readers, that a worm fence is a coarse, zigzag railing, common in the new settlements of America where timber is plentiful.

bite worse than a Frenchman. As George Brandon's passion was returned with equal ardour, and the object of it was young and inexperienced as himself, all the obstacles opposed to their union only served to add fuel to the flame: and, after repeated but vain endeavours on the part of Lucy Shirley to reconcile her father, or her only brother, to the match, she eloped with her young lover; and, by a rapid escape into Scotland, where they were immediately married, they rendered abortive all attempt at pursuit.

It was not long before the young couple began to feel some of the painful consequences of their imprudence. The old squire was not to be appeased; he would neither see his daughter, nor would he open one of the many letters which she wrote to entreat his forgiveness: but, although incensed, he was a proud man and scrupulously just in all his dealings: Lucy had been left £10,000 by her grand-mother, but it was not due to her until she attained her twenty-first year, or *married with her father's consent*. The squire waved both these conditions; he knew that his daughter had fallen from a brilliant sphere to one comparatively humble. Even in the midst of his wrath he did not wish her to starve, and accordingly instructed his lawyer to write to Mrs. Brandon, and to inform her that he had orders to pay her £500 a-year, until she thought fit to demand the payment of the principal.

George and his wife returned, after a brief absence, to England, and made frequent efforts to overcome by entreaty and submission the old squire's obduracy; but it was all in vain; neither were they more successful in propitiating the young squire, an eccentric youth, who lived among dogs and horses, and who had imbibed from his father a hereditary taste for old port, and an antipathy to Jacobites. His reply to a letter which George wrote, entreating his good offices in effecting a reconciliation between Lucy and her father, will serve better than an elaborate description to illustrate his character; it ran as follows:—

Sir,

When my sister married a Jacobite, against father's consent, she carried her eggs to a fool's market, and she must make the best of her own bargain. Father isn't such a flat as to be gulled with your fine words now; and tho' they say I'm not over forw'rd in my schoolin', you must put some better bait on your trap before you catch

Marmaduke Shirley, Jun.

It may well be imagined, that after the receipt of this epistle George Brandon did not seek to renew his intercourse with Lucy's brother; but as she had now presented him with a little boy, he began to meditate seriously on the means which he should adopt to better his fortunes.

One of his most intimate and esteemed friends, Digby Ethelston, being like himself, a portionless member of an ancient family, had gone out early in life to America, and had, by dint of persevering industry, gained a respectable competence; while in the southern colonies he had married the daughter of an old French planter, who had left the marquisate to which he was entitled in his own country, in order to live in peace and quiet among the sugar canes and cotton fields of Louisiana; Ethelston had received with his wife a considerable accession of fortune, and they were on the eve of returning across the Atlantic, her husband having settled all the affairs which had brought him to England.

His representations of the New World made a strong impression on the sanguine mind of George Brandon, and he proposed to his wife to emigrate with their little one to America: poor Lucy, cut off from her own family and devoted to her husband, made no difficulty whatever, and it was soon settled that they should accompany the Ethelstons.

George now called upon Mr. Shirley's solicitor, a dry, matter-of-fact, parchment man, to inform him of their intention, and of their wish that the principal of Lucy's fortune might be paid up. The lawyer took down a dusty box of black tin, whereon was engraved "Marmaduke Shirley, Esq., Shirley Hall, No. 7," and after carefully perusing a paper of instructions, he said, "Mrs. Brandon's legacy shall be paid up, sir, on the 1st of July to any party whom she may empower to receive it on her behalf, and to give a legal discharge for the same."

"And pray, sir," said George, hesitating, "as we are going across the Atlantic, perhaps never to return, do you not think Mr. Shirley would see his daughter once before she sails, to give her his blessing?

Again the man of parchment turned his sharp nose towards the paper, and having scanned its contents, he said, "I find nothing, sir, in these instructions on that point; Good morning, Mr Brandon—James, shew in Sir John Waltham.

George walked home dispirited, and the punctual solicitor failed not to inform the squire immediately of the young couple's intended emigration and the demand for the paying up of the sum due to Lucy. In spite of his long cherished prejudices against George Brandon's Jacobite family, and his anger at the elopement, he was somewhat softened by time, by what he heard of the blameless life led by the young man, and by the respectful conduct that the latter had evinced towards his wife's family; for it had happened on one occasion that some of his young companions had thought fit to speak of the obstinacy and stinginess of the old squire; this language George had instantly and indignantly checked, saying, "My conduct in marrying his daughter against his consent, was unjustifiable; though he has not forgiven her, he has behaved justly and honourably; any word spoken disrespectfully of my wife's father, I shall consider a personal insult to myself."

This had accidentally reached the ears of the old squire, and, though still too proud and too obstinate to agree to any reconciliation, he said to the solicitor: "Perkins, I will not be reconciled to these scapegraces, I will have no intercourse with them, but I will *see* Lucy before she goes; she must not see me;—arrange it as you please; desire her to come to your house to sign the discharge for the £10,000, in person; you can put me in a cupboard, in the next room, where you will, a glass door will do;—you understand?"

"Yes, sir. When?"

'Oh, the sooner the better; whenever the papers are ready."

"It shall be done, sir." And thus the interview closed.

Meantime George made one final effort in a letter which he addressed to the Squire, couched in terms at once manly and respectful; owning the errors that he had committed, but hoping that forgiveness might precede this long, this last separation.

This letter was returned to him unopened, and in order to conceal from Lucy the grief and mortification of his high and wounded spirit, he was obliged to absent himself from home for many hours, and when he did return, it was with a clouded brow.

Certainly the fate of this young couple, though not altogether prosperous, was in one particular a remarkable exception to the usual results of a runaway match; they were affectionately and entirely devoted to each other; and Lucy, though she had been once, and only once, a disobedient daughter, was the most loving and obedient of wives.

The day fixed for her signature arrived. Mr. Perkins had made all his arrangements agreeably to his wealthy client's instructions; and when, accompanied by her husband, she entered the solicitor's study, she was little conscious that her father was separated from her only by a frail door, which being left ajar, he could see her, and hear every word that she spoke.

Mr. Perkins, placing the draft of the discharge into George Brandon's hand, together with the instrument whereby his wife was put in possession of the £10,000, said to him, "Would it not be better, sir, to send for your solicitor to inspect these papers on behalf of yourself and Mrs. Brandon, before she signs the discharge?"

"Allow me to inquire, sir," replied George, 'whether Mr. Shirley has perused these papers, and has placed them here for his daughter's signature?"

"Assuredly, he has, sir," said the lawyer, "and I have too, on his behalf; you do not imagine, sir, that my client would pay the capital sum without being certain that the discharge was regular and sufficient!"

"Then I am satisfied, sir," said George, with something of disdain expressed on his fine countenance. "Mr. Shirley is a man of honour, and a father; whatever he has sent for his daughter's signature will secure her interests as effectually as if a dozen solicitors had inspected it."

At the conclusion of this speech, a sort of indistinct *hem* proceeded from the ensconced Squire, to cover which Mr. Perkins said, "But, sir, it is not usual to sign papers of this conquence without examining them."

"Lucy, my dear," said George, turning with a smile of affectionate confidence to his wife; "to oblige Mr. Perkins, I will read through these two papers attentively; sit down for a minute, as they are somewhat long;" so saying, he applied himself at once to his task.

Meantime, Lucy, painfully agitated and excited, made several attempts to address Mr. Perkins; but her voice failed her, as soon as she turned her eyes upon that gentleman's rigid countenance, at length however, by a desperate effort, she succeeded in asking, tremulously, "Mr. Perkins, have you seen my father lately?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the lawyer, nibbing his pen.

"Oh! tell me how he is!—Has the gout left him?—Can he ride to the farm as he used?"

"He is well, madam, very well, I believe."

"Shall you see him soon again, sir?"

"Yes, madam, I must show him these papers when signed."

"Oh! then, tell him, that his daughter, who never disobeyed him but once, has wept bitterly for her fault; that she will probably never see him again, in this world; that she blesses him in her daily prayers. Oh! tell him, I charge you as you are a man, tell him, that I could cross the ocean happy; that I could bear years of sickness, of privation, happy; that I could die happy, if I had but my dear, dear father's blessing." As she said this, the young wife had unconsciously fallen upon one knee before the man of law, and her tearful eyes were bent upon his countenance in earnest supplication.

Again an indistinct noise, as of a suppressed groan or sob, was heard from behind the door, and the solicitor wiping his spectacles and turning away his face to conceal an emotion of which he felt rather ashamed, said: "I will tell him all you desire, madam; and if I receive his instructions to make any communication in reply, I will make it faithfully, and without loss of time."

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times, said Lucy; and resuming her seat, she endeavoured to recover her composure.

George had by this time run his eye over the papers, and although he had overheard his wife's appeal to the solicitor, he would not interrupt her, nor throw any obstacle in the way of an object which he knew she had so much at heart. "I am perfectly satisfied, sir," said he; "you have nothing to do but to provide the witnesses, and Mrs. Brandon will affix her signature."

Two clerks of Mr. Perkins' were accordingly summoned, and the discharge having been signed in their presence, they retired. Mr. Perkins now drew another paper from the leaves of a book on his table, saying: "Mr. Brandon, the discharge being now signed and attested, I have further instructions from Mr. Shirley to inform you that although he cannot alter his determination of refusing to see his daughter, or holding any intercourse with yourself, he is desirous that you should not in America find yourself in straitened circumstances; and has accordingly authorised me to place in your hands this draft upon his banker for £5000."

"Mr. Perkins," said George, in a tone of mingled sadness and pride; "in the payment of the £10,000, my wife's fortune, Mr. Shirley, though acting honourably, has only done justice, and has dealt as he would have dealt with strangers; had he thought proper to listen to my wife's, or to my own repeated entreaties for forgiveness and reconciliation, I would gratefully have received from him, as from a father, any favour that he wished to confer on us; but, sir, as he refuses to see me under his roof, or even to give his affectionate and repentant child a parting blessing, I would rather work for my daily

bread than receive at his hands the donation of a guinea."

As he said this, he tore the draft and scattered its shreds on the table before the astonished lawyer. Poor Lucy was still in tears, yet one look assured her husband that she *felt* with him. He added in a gentler tone, "Mr. Perkins accept my acknowledgments for your courtesy;" and offering his arm to Lucy, turned to leave the room.

CHAPTER III.

Containing some further account of Colonel and Mrs. Brandon, and of the Education of their son Reginald.

While the scene described in the last chapter was passing in the lawyer's study, stormy and severe was the struggle going on in the breast of the listening father; more than once he had been on the point of rushing into the room to fold his child in his arms; but that obstinate pride, which causes in life so many bitter hours of regret, prevented him, and checked the natural impulse of affection: still, as she turned with her husband to leave the room, he unconsciously opened the door, on the lock of which his hand rested, as he endeavoured to get one last look at a face which he had so long loved and caressed. The door being thus partially opened, a very diminutive and favourite spaniel, that accompanied him wherever he went, escaped through the aperture, and, recognizing Lucy, barked and jumped upon her in an ecstacy of delight.

"Heavens!" cried she, "it is—it must be Fan'" At another time she would have fondly caressed it, but one only thought now occupied her; trembling on her husband's arm, she whispered, "George, papa *must* be here." At that moment her eye caught the partially-opened door, which the agitated Squire still held, and, breaking from her husband, she flew as if by instinct into the adjacent room, and fell at her father's feet.

Poor Mr. Perkins was now grievously disconcerted, and calling out, "This way, madam, this way; that is not the right door," was about to follow, when George Brandon, laying his hand upon the lawyer's arm, said impressively,

"Stay, sir; that room is sacred!" and led him back to his chair. His quick mind had seized in a moment the correctness of Lucy's conjecture, and his good feeling taught him that no third person, not even he, should intrude upon the father and the child.

The old squire could not make a long resistance when the gush of his once-loved Lucy's tears trickled upon his hand, and while her half-choked voice sobbed for his pardon and his blessing; it was in vain that he summoned all his pride, all his strength, all his anger; Nature would assert her rights; and in another minute his child's head was on his bosom, and he whispered over her, "I forgive you Lucy; may God bless you, as I do!"

For some time after this was the interview prolonged, and Lucy seemed to be pleading for some boon which she could not obtain; nevertheless her tears, her old familiar childish caresses, had regained something of their former dominion over the choleric, but warm-hearted Squire; and in a voice of joy that thrilled even through the quiet man of law, she cried, "George! George, come in!" he leaped from his seat, and in a moment was at the feet of her father. There as he knelt by Lucy's side, the old Squire put one hand upon the head of each, saying, "My children, all that you have ever done to offend me is forgotten; continue to love and to cherish each other, and may God prosper you with every blessing!" George Brandon's heart was full; he could not speak, but straining his wife affectionately to his bosom, and kissing her father's hand, he withdrew into a corner of the room, and for some minutes remained oppressed by emotions too strong to find relief in expressions.

We need not detail at length the consequences of this happy and unexpected reconciliation. The check was re-written, was doubled, and was accepted. George still persevered in his wish to accompany his friend to Virginia; where Ethelston assured him that, with his £20,000 prudently managed, he might easily acquire a sufficient fortune for himself and his family.

How mighty is the power of circumstance: and upon what small pivots does Providence some times allow the wheels of human fortune to be turned! Here, in the instance just related, the blessing or unappeased wrath of a father, the joy or despair of a daughter, the peace or discord of a family, all, all were dependent upon the bark and caress of a spaniel! For that stern old man had made his determination, and would have adhered to it, if Lucy had not thus been made aware of his presence, and by her grief aiding the voice of Nature, overthrown all the defences of his pride.

It happened that the young Squire was at this time in Paris, his father having sent him thither to see the world and learn to fence; a letter was, however, written by Lucy, announcing to him the happy reconciliation, and entreating him to participate in their common happiness.

The arrangements for the voyage were soon completed; the cabin of a large vessel being engaged to convey the whole party to Norfolk in Virginia. The Old Squire offered no opposition, considering that George Brandon was too old to begin a profession in England, and that he might employ his time and abilities advantageously in the New World.

We may pass over many of the ensuing years, the events of which have little influence on our narrative, merely informing the reader that the investment of Brandon's money, made by the advice of Ethelston, was prosperous in the extreme. In the course of a year or two, Mrs. Brandon presented her lord with a little girl, who was named after herself. In the following year, Mrs. Ethelston had also a daughter: the third confinement was not so fortunate, and she died in childbed, leaving to Ethelston, Edward, then about nine, and little Evelyn a twelvemonth old.

It was on this sad occasion that he persuaded his sister to come out from England to reside with him, and take care of his motherless children: a task that she undertook and fulfilled with the love and devotion of the most affectionate mother.

In course of time the war broke out which ended in the independence of the Colonies. During its commencement, Brandon and Ethelston both remained firm to the Crown; but as it advanced, they became gradually convinced of the impolicy and injustice of the claims urged by England; Brandon having sought an interview with Washington, the arguments, and the character, of that great man decided him; he joined the Independent party, obtained a command, and distinguished himself so much as to obtain the esteem and regard of his commander. As soon as peace was established he had, for reasons before stated, determined to change his residence, and persuaded Ethelston to accompany him with his family.

After the dreadful domestic calamity mentioned in the first chapter, and the untimely death of Ethelston, Colonel Brandon sent Edward, the son of his deceased friend, to a distant relative in Hamburgh, desiring that every care might be given to give him a complete mercantile and liberal education, including two years' study at a German university.

Meanwhile the old Squire Brandon was dead, but his son and successor had written, after his own strange fashion, a letter to his sister, begging her to send over her boy to England, and he would "make a man of him." After duly weighing this proposal, Colonel and Mrs. Brandon determined to avail themselves of it; and Reginald was accordingly sent over to his uncle, who had promised to enter him immediately at Oxford.

When Reginald arrived, Marmaduke Shirley turned him round half a dozen times, felt his arms, punched his ribs, looked at his ruddy cheeks and brown hair, that had never known a barber, and exclaimed to a brother sportsman who was standing by, "D—d if he ain't one of the right sort! eh, Harry?" But if the uncle was pleased with the lad's appearance, much more delighted was he with his accomplishments: for he could *walk down* any keeper on the estate, he sat on a horse like a young centaur, and his accuracy with a rifle perfectly confounded the Squire. "If this isn't a chip of the old block, my name isn't Marmaduke Shirley," said he; and for a moment a shade crossed his usually careless brow, as he remembered that he had wooed, and married, and been left a childless widower.

But although at Shirley Hall Reginald followed the sports of the field with the ardour natural to his age and character, he rather annoyed the Squire by his obstinate and persevering attention to his studies at College; he remembered that walking and shooting were accomplishments which he might have acquired and perfected in the woods of Virginia; but he felt it due to his parents, and to the confidence which they had reposed in his discretion, to carry back with him some more useful knowledge and learning.

With this dutiful motive, he commenced his studies; and as he advanced in them, his naturally quick intellect seized on and appreciated the beauties presented to it; authors, in whose writings he had imagined and expected little else but difficulties, soon became easy and familiar; and what he had imposed upon himself from a high principle as a task, proved, ere long a source of abundant pleasure.

In the vacations he visited his good-humoured uncle, who never failed to rally him as a "Latin-monger" and a book-worm; but Reginald bore the jokes with temper not less merry than his uncle's; and whenever, after a hard run, he had "pounded" the Squire or the huntsman, he never failed to retaliate by answering the compliments paid him on his riding with some such jest as "Pretty well for a book-worm, uncle." It soon became evident to all the tenants, servants, and indeed to the whole neighbourhood, that Reginald exercised a despotic influence over the Squire, who respected internally those literary attainments in his nephew which he affected to ridicule.

When Reginald had taken his degree, which he did with high honour and credit, he felt an ardent desire to visit his friend and school-fellow, Edward Ethelston, in Germany; he was also anxious to see something of the Continent, and to study the foreign languages; this wish he expressed without circumlocution to the Squire, who received the communication with undisguised disapprobation: "What the devil can the boy want to go abroad for? not satisfied with wasting two or three years poking over Greek, Latin, Mathematics, and other infernal 'atics' and 'ologies,' now you must go across the Channel, to eat sour-crout, soup-maigre, and frogs! I won't hear of it, sir;" and in order to keep his wrath warm, the Squire poked the fire violently.

In spite of this determination Reginald, as usual carried his point, and in a few weeks was on board a packet bound for Hamburgh, his purse being well filled by the Squire, who told him to see all that could be seen, and "not to let any of those Mounseers top him at anything." Reginald was also provided with letters of credit to a much larger amount than he required; but the first hint which he gave of a wish to decline a portion of the Squire's generosity raised such a storm, that our hero was fain to submit.

CHAPTER IV.

Containing sundry adventures of Reginald Brandon and his friend Ethelston on the Continent; also some further proceedings at Squire Shirley's; and the return of Reginald Brandon to his home. In this chapter the sporting reader will find an example of an unmade rider on a made hunter.

Reginald having joined his attached and faithful friend Ethelston at Hamburgh, the young men agreed to travel together; and the intimacy of their early boyhood ripened into a mature friendship, based upon a mutual esteem; in personal advantages, Reginald was greatly the superior; for although unusually tall and strongly built, such was the perfect symmetry of his proportions, that his height, and the great muscular strength of his chest and limbs, were carried off by the grace with which he moved, and by the air of high-breeding by which he was distinguished; his countenance was noble and open in expression; and though there was a fire in his dark eye which betokened passions easily aroused, still there was a frankness on the brow, and a smile around the mouth that told of a nature at once kindly, fearless, and without suspicion.

Ethelston, who was, be it remembered, three years older than his friend, was of middle stature, but active and well proportioned; his hair and eyebrows were of the jettest black, and his countenance thoughtful and grave; but there was about the full and firm lip an expression of determination not to be mistaken; habits of study and reflection had already written their trace upon his high and intellectual brow; so that one who saw him for the first time might imagine him only a severe student; but ere he had seen him an hour in society, he would pronounce him a man of practical and commanding character. The shade of melancholy, which was almost habitual on his countenance, dated from the death of his father, brought prematurely by sorrow to his grave, and from the loss of his little sister, to whom he had been tenderly attached. The two friends loved each other with the affection of brothers; and, after the separation of the last few years, each found in the other newly developed qualities to esteem.

The state of Europe during the autumn of 1795 not being favourable for distant excursions, Ethelston contented himself with showing his friend all objects worthy of his attention in the north of Germany, and at the same time assisted him in attaining its rich, though difficult language; by associating much during the winter, with the students from the Universities, Reginald caught some of their enthusiasm respecting the defence of their country from the arms of the French republic; he learned that a large number of Ethelston's acquaintances at Hamburgh had resolved in the spring to join a corps of volunteers from the Hanseatic towns, destined to fight under the banner of the Archduke Charles; to their own surprise, our two friends were carried away by the stream, and found themselves enrolled in a small, but active and gallant band of sharp-shooters, ordered to act on the flank of a large body of Austrian infantry. More than once the impetuous courage of Reginald had nearly cost him his life; and in the action at Amberg, where the Archduke defeated General Bernadotte, he received two wounds, such as would have disabled a man of less hardy constitution. It was in vain that Ethelston, whose bravery was tempered by unruffled coolness, urged his friend to expose himself less wantonly; Reginald always promised it, but in the excitement of the action always forgot the promise.

After he had recovered from his wounds, his commanding officer, who had noticed his fearless daring, a quality so valuable in the skirmishing duty, to which his corps were appointed, sent for him, and offered to promote him. 'Sir," said Reginald, modestly, "I thank you heartily, but I must decline the honour you propose to me. I am too inexperienced to lead others; my friend and comrade, Ethelston, is three years my senior; in action he is always by my side, sometimes before me; he has more skill or riper judgment; any promotion that should prefer me before him, would be most painful to me." He bowed and withdrew. On the following day, the same officer, who had mentioned Reginald's conduct to the Archduke, presented each of the friends, from him, with a *gold medal of the Emperor*; a distinction the *more gratifying to Reginald, from* his knowledge that *he* had been secretly the means of bringing his friend's merit into the notice of his commander.

They served through the remainder of that campaign, when the arms of the contending parties met with alternate success; towards its close, the Archduke having skilfully effected his object of uniting his forces to the corps d'armée under General Wartenleben, compelled the French to evacuate Franconia, and to retire towards Switzerland.

This retreat was conducted with much skill by General Moreau; several times did the French rear-guard make an obstinate stand against the pursuers, among whom Reginald and his comrades were always the foremost. On one occasion, the French army occupied a position so strong that they were not driven from it without heavy loss on both sides; and even after the force of numbers had compelled the main body to retire, there remained a gallant band who seemed resolved to conquer or die upon the field; in vain did the Austrian leaders, in admiration of their devoted valour, call to them to surrender; without yielding an inch of ground, they fell fighting where they stood. Reginald made the most desperate efforts to save their young commander, whose chivalrous appearance and brilliantly decorated uniform made him remarkable from a great distance; several times did he strike aside a barrel pointed at the French officer; but it was too late; and when at length, covered with dust, and sweat, and blood, he reached the spot, he found the young hero whom he had striven to save, stretched on the ground by several mortal wounds in his breast; he saw, however, Reginald's kind intention, smiled gratefully upon him, waved his sword over his head, and died.

The excitement of the battle was over, and leaning on his sword, Reginald still bent over the noble form and marble features of the young warrior at his feet, and he sighed deeply when he thought how suddenly had this flower of manly beauty been cut down. "Perhaps," said he, half aloud, "some now childless mother yet waits for this last prop of her age and name; or some betrothed lingers at her window, and wonders why he so long delays."

Ethelston was at his side, his eyes also bent sadly upon the same object; the young friends interchanged a warm and silent grasp of the hand, each feeling that he read the heart of the other! At this moment, a groan escaped from a wounded man, who was half buried under the bleeding bodies of his comrades; with some difficulty Reginald dragged him out from below them, and the poor fellow thanked him for his humanity; he had only received a slight wound on the head from a spent ball, which had stunned him for the time; but he soon recovered from its effects, and looking around, he saw the body of the young commander stretched on the plain.

"*Ah, mon pauvre General!*" he exclaimed: and on farther inquiry, Reginald learned that it was indeed the gallant, the admired, the beloved General Marceau, whose brilliant career was thus untimely closed.

"I will go," whispered Ethelston, "and bear this tidings to the Archduke; meantime, Regi

naid, guard the honoured remains from the camp-spoiler and the plunderer." So saying he withdrew; and Reginald, stooping over the prostrate form before him, stretched it decently, closed the eyes, and throwing a mantle over the splendid uniform, sat down to indulge in the serious meditations inspired by the scene.

He was soon aroused from them by the poor fellow whom he had dragged forth, who said to him, "Sir, I yield myself your prisoner."

"And who are you, my friend?"

"I was courier, valet, and cook to M. de Vareuil, aide-de-camp to the General Marceau; both lie dead together before you."

"And what is your name, my good fellow?"

"Gustave Adolphe Montmorenci Perrot."

"A fair string of names, indeed," said Reginald, smiling. "But pray, Monsieur Perrot, how came you here? are you a soldier as well as a courier?"

"Monsieur does me too much honour," said the other, shrugging his shoulders. "I only came from the baggage-train with a message to my master, and your avant-garde peppered us so hotly that I could not get back again. I am not fond of fighting; but somehow, when I saw poor Monsieur de Vareuil in so sad a plight, I did not wish to leave him."

Reginald looked at the speaker, and thought he had never seen in one face such a compound of slyness and honesty, drollery and sadness. He did not, however, reply, and relapsed into his meditation. Before five minutes had passed, Monsieur Perrot, as if struck by a sudden idea, fell on his knees before Reginald, and said,

Monsieur has saved my life—will he grant me yet one favour?"

"If within my power," said Reginald, good-humouredly.

"Will Monsieur take me into his service? I have travelled over all Europe; I have lived long in Paris, London, Vienna; I may be of use to Monsieur; but I have no home now."

"Nay, but Monsieur Perrot, I want no servant; I am only a volunteer with the army."

"I see what Monsieur is," said Perrot, archly, "in spite of the dust and blood with which he is disfigured. I will ask no salary; I will share your black bread, if you are poor, and will live in your pantry if you are rich: I only want to serve you."

Monsieur Perrot's importunity overruled all the objections that Reginald could raise; and he at last consented to the arrangement, provided the former, after due reflection, should adhere to his wish.

Ethelston meanwhile returned with the party sent by the Archduke to pay the last token of respect to the remains of the youthful General. They were interred with all the military honours due to an officer whose reputation was, considering his years, second to none in France, save that of Napoleon himself.

After the ceremony, Monsieur Perrot, now on parole not to bear arms against Austria, obtained leave to return to the French camp for a week, in order to "arrange his affairs," at the expiration of which he promised to rejoin his new master. Ethelston blamed Reginald for his thoughtlessness in engaging this untried attendant. The latter, however, laughed at his friend, and said, "Though he is such a droll-looking creature, I think there is good in him at all events, rest assured I will not trust him far without trial."

A few weeks after these events, General Moreau having effected his retreat into Switzerland, an armistice was concluded on the Rhine between the contending armies; and Reginald could no longer resist the imperative commands of his Uncle to return to Shirley Hall. Monsieur Gustave Adolphe Montmorenci Perrot had joined his new master, with a valise admirably stocked, and wearing a peruke of a most fashionable cut. Ethelston shrewdly suspected that these had formed part of poor Monsieur de Vareuil's wardrobe, and his dislike of Reginald's foppish valet was not thereby diminished.

On the route to Hamburgh the friends passed through many places where the luxuries, and even the necessaries, of life had been rendered scarce by the late campaign. Here Perrot was in his element; fatigue seemed to be unknown to him; he was always ready, active, useful as a courier, and unequalled as a cook and a caterer, so that Ethelston was compelled to confess that if he only proved honest, Reginald had indeed found a treasure.

At Hamburgh the two friends took an affectionate farewell, promising to meet each other in the course of the following year on the banks of the Ohio. Reginald returned to his Uncle, who stormed dreadfully when he learned that he had brought with him a French valet, and remained implacable in spite of the circumstances under which he had been engaged; until one morning, when a footman threw down the tray on which he was carrying up the Squire's breakfast of beeksteaks and stewed kidneys, half an hour before "the meet" at his best coverside. What could now be done? The cook was sulky, and sent word that there were no more steaks or kidneys to be had. The Squire was wrath and hungry. Reginald laughed, and said, "Uncle, send for Perrot."

"Perrot be d—d!" cried the Squire. "Does the boy think I want some pomatum? What else could that coxcomb give me?"

"May I try him, Uncle?" said Reginald, still laughing.

"You may try him: but if he plays any of his jackanapes pranks, I'll tan his hide for him, I promise you!"

Reginald having rung for Perrot, pointed to the remains of the good things which a servant was still gathering up, and said to him, "Send up breakfast for Mr. Shirley and myself in one quarter of an hour from this minute: you are permitted to use what you find in the larder; but be punctual."

Perrot bowed, and, without speaking, disappeared.

"The devil take the fellow! he has *some* sense," said the angry Squire; "he can receive an order without talking; one of my hulking knaves would have stood there five minutes out of the fifteen, saying, 'Yes, sir; I'll see what can be done:' or, 'I'll ask Mr. Alltripe,' or some other infernal stuff. Come, Reginald, look at your watch. Let us stroll to the stable; we'll be back to a minute; and if that fellow plays any of his French tricks upon me, I'll give it him." So saying, the jolly Squire cut the head off one of his gardener's favourite plants.

with his hunting whip, and led the way to the stable.

We may now return to Monsieur Perrot, and see how he set about the discharge of his sudden commission; but it may be necessary, at the same time, to explain one or two particulars not known to his master, or to the Squire. Monsieur Perrot was very gallant, and his tender heart had been smitten by the charms of Mary, the still-room maid; it so happened on this very morning that he had prepared slily, as a surprise, a little "*déjeuner à la fourchette*," with which he intended to soften Mary's obduracy. We will not inquire *how* he had obtained the mushroom, the lemon, and the sundry other good things with which he was busily engaged in dressing a plump hen-pheasant, when he received the above unexpected summons. Monsieur Perrot's vanity was greater than either his gourmandise or his love; and, without hesitation, he determined to sacrifice to it the hen-pheasant: his first step was to run to the still-room; and having stolen a kiss from Mary, and received a box on the ear as a reward, he gave her two or three very brief but important hints for the coffee, which was to be made immediately; he then turned his attention to the hen-pheasant, sliced some bacon, cut up a ham, took possession of a whole basket of eggs, and flew about the kitchen with such surprising activity, and calling for so many things at once, that Mr. Alltripe left his dominion, and retired to his own room in high dudgeon.

Meanwhile the Squire, having sauntered through the stables with Reginald, and enlightened him with various comments upon the points and qualities of his favourite hunters, took out his watch, and exclaimed, "the time is up, my boy; let us go in and see what your precious Mounseer has got for us." As they entered the library, Monsieur opened the opposite door, and announced breakfast as quietly and composedly as if no unusual demand had been made upon his talents. The Squire led the way into the breakfast-room, and was scarcely more surprised than was Reginald himself at the viands that regaled his eye on the table. In addition to the brown and white loaves, the rolls, and other varieties of bread, there smoked on one dish the delicate salmi of pheasant, on another the Squire's favourite dish of bacon, with poached eggs, and on a third, a most tempting *Omelette au Jambon*.

Marmaduke Shirley opened his eyes and mouth wide with astonishment, as Monsieur Perrot offered him, one after another, these delicacies, inquiring, with undisturbed gravity, if "Monsieur desired anything else? as there were other dishes ready below!"

"Other dishes! why, man, here's a breakfast for a Court of aldermen," said the Squire; and having ascertained that the things were as agreeable to the taste as to the eye, and that the coffee was more clear and high flavoured than he had ever tasted before, he seized his nephew's hand, saying, "Reginald, my boy, I give in; your Master Perrot's a trump, and no man shall ever speak a word against him in this house! A rare fellow!" here he took another turn at the omelette; "hang me if he shan't have a day's sport;" and the Squire, chuckling at the idea that had suddenly crossed him, rang the bell violently: "Tell Repton, said he to the servant who entered, "to saddle 'Rattling Bess' for Monsieur Perrot, and to take her to the cover-side with the other horses, at ten."

"She kicks a bit at starting," he added to Reginald; "but she's as safe as a mill; and though she rushes now and then at the fences, she always gets through or over 'em."

Now it was poor Perrot's turn to be astonished: to do him justice, he was neither a bad horseman (as a courier) nor a coward; but he had never been out with hounds, and the enumeration of "Rattling Bess's" qualities did not sound very attractive to his ear; he began gently to make excuses, and to decline the proposed favour: he had not the "proper dress;" "he had much to do for Monsieur's wardrobe at home;" but it was all to no purpose, the Squire was determined; Repton's coat and breeches would fit him, and go he *must*.

With a rueful look at his master, Perrot slunk off, cursing in his heart the salmi and the omelette, which had procured him this undesired favour; but he was ordered to lose no time in preparing himself, so he first endeavoured to get into Mr. Ripton's clothes; that proved impossible, as Mr. R. *had* been a racing jockey, and was a feather-weight, with legs like nutcrackers; having no time for deliberation, Monsieur Perrot drew from his valise the courier suit which he had worn in France; and, to the surprise of the whole party assembled at the door, he appeared clad in a blue coat, turned up with yellow, a cornered hat, and enormous boots, half a foot higher than his knees: he was ordered to jump up behind the Squire's carriage, and away they went to the cover-side, amid the ill-suppressed titter of the grooms and footmen, and the loud laughter of the maids, whose malicious faces, not excepting that of Mary, were at the open windows below.

When they reached the place appointed for "the meet," and proceeded to mount the impatient horses awaiting them, Perrot eyed with no agreeable anticipation the long ears of Rattling Bess laid back, and the restless wag of her rat-tail, and he ventured one more attempt at an escape. "Really, sir," said he to the Squire, "I never hunted, and I don't think I can manage that animal; she looks very savage."

"Never mind her, Monsieur Perrot," said the Squire, enjoying the poor valet's ill-dissembled uneasiness. "She knows her business here as well as any whipper-in or huntsman; only let her go her own way, and you'll never be far from the brush."

"Very well," muttered Perrot; "I hope *she* knows *her* business; I know mine, and that is to keep on her back, which I'll do as well as I can."

The eyes of the whole field were upon this strangely attired figure, and as soon as he got into the saddle, "Rattling Bess" began to kick and plunge violently; we have said that he was not in some respects a bad horseman, and although in this, her first prank, he lost one of his stirrups, and his cornered hat fell off, he contrived to keep both his seat and his temper; while the hounds were drawing the cover, one of the Squire's grooms restored the hat, and

gave him a string wherewith to fasten it, an operation which he had scarcely concluded, when the inspiring shouts of "Tally-ho," "Gone away," "Forward," rang on his ears. "Rattling Bess" seemed to understand the sounds as well as ever alderman knew a dinner-bell; and away she went at full gallop, convincing Monsieur Perrot, after an ineffectual struggle of a few minutes on his part, that both the speed and direction of her course were matters over which he could not exercise the smallest influence.

On they flew, over meadow and stile, ditch and hedge, nothing seemed to check Rattling Bess; and while all the field were in astonished admiration at the reckless riding of the strange courier, that worthy was catching his breath and muttering through his teeth "Diable d'animal, she have a mouth so hard, like one of Mr. Alltripe's bif-steak—she know her business—and a sacré business it is—holà there! mind yourself!" he shouted at the top of his voice, to a horseman whose horse had fallen in brushing through a thick hedge, and was struggling to rise on the other side just as Rattling Bess followed at tremendous speed over the same place; lighting upon the hind-quarters of her hapless predecessor, and scraping all the skin off his loins, she knocked the rider head over heels into the ploughed field where his face was buried a foot deep in dirty mould; by a powerful effort she kept herself from falling, and went gallantly over the field; Perrot still muttering, as he tugged at the insensible mouth, "She know her business, she kill dat poor devil in the dirt, she kill herself and me too."

A few minutes later, the hounds, having overrun the scent, came to a check, and were gathered by the huntsman into a green lane, whence they were about to "try back" as Rattling Bess came up at unabated speed. "Hold hard there, hold hard!" shouted at once the huntsman, the whips, and the few sportsmen who were up with the hounds. "Where the devil are you going, man?" "The fox is viewed back." "Hallo!—you're riding into the middle of the pack." These and similar cries scarcely had time to reach the ears of Perrot, ere "Rattling Bess" sprang over the hedge into the green lane, and coming down among the unfortunate dogs, split the head of one, broke the back of another, and laming two or three more, carried her rider over the opposite fence, who still panting for breath, with his teeth set, muttered, "She know her business, sacré animal."

After crossing two more fields, she cleared a hedge so thick that he could not see what was on the other side; but he heard a tremendous crash, and was only conscious of being hurled with violence to the ground; slowly recovering his senses, he saw Rattling Bess lying a few yards from him, bleeding profusely; and his own ears were saluted by the following compassionate inquiry from the lips of a gardener, who was standing over him, spade in hand: "D—n your stupid outlandish head, what be you a doin' here?"

The half-stunned courier, pointing to Rattling Bess, replied: "She know her business."

The gardener, though enraged at the entire demolition of his melon-bed, and of sundry forced vegetables *under glass*, was not an ill-tempered fellow in the main; and seeing that the horse was half killed, and the rider, a foreigner, much bruised, he assisted poor Perrot to rise, and having gathered from him, that he was in the service of rich Squire Shirley, rendered all the aid in his power to him and to Rattling Bess, who had received some very severe cuts from the glass.

When the events of the day came to be talked over at the Hall, and it proved that it was the Squire himself whom Perrot had so unceremoniously ridden over,—that the huntsman would expect some twenty guineas for the hounds, killed or maimed,—that the gardener would probably present a similar, or a larger account for a broken melon-bed and shivered glass,—*and* that Rattling Bess was lame for the season, the Squire did not encourage much conversation on the day's sport; the only remark that he was heard to make, being "What a fool I was to put a frog-eating Frenchman on an English hunter!"

Monsieur Perrot remained in his room for three or four days, not caring that Mary should see his visage while it was adorned with a black eye and an inflamed nose.

Soon after this eventful chase, Reginald obtained his Uncle's leave to obey his father's wishes by visiting Paris for a few months; his stay there was shortened by a letter which he received from his sister Lucy, announcing to him his mother's illness, on the receipt of which he wrote a few hurried lines of explanation to his Uncle, and sailed by the first ship for Philadelphia, accompanied by the faithful Perrot, and by a large rough dog of the breed of the old Irish wolf-hound, given to him by the Squire.

On arriving, he found his mother better than he had expected; and, as he kissed off the tears of joy which Lucy shed on his return, he whispered to her his belief that she had a little exaggerated their mother's illness, in order to recall him. After a short time, Ethelston also returned, and joined the happy circle assembled at Colonel Brandon's.

It was now the spring of 1797, between which time and that mentioned as the date of our opening chapter, a period of nearly two years nothing worthy of peculiar record occurred; Reginald kept up a faithful correspondence with his kind uncle, whose letters showed how deeply he felt his nephew's absence. Whether Monsieur Perrot interchanged letters with Mary, or consoled himself with the damsels on the banks of the Ohio, the following pages may show. His master made several hunting excursions, on which he was always accompanied by Baptiste, a sturdy backwoodsman, who was more deeply attached to Reginald than to any other being on earth; and Ethelston had, as we have before explained, undertaken the whole charge of his guardian's vessels, with one of the largest of which he was, at the commencement of our tale, absent in the West India Islands.

CHAPTER V.

An adventure in the woods.—Reginald Brandon makes the acquaintance of an Indian chief.

It was a bright morning in April; the robin was beginning his early song, the wood-pecker darted his beak against the rough bark, and the

squirrel hopped merrily from bough to bough among the gigantic trees of the forest, as two hunters followed a winding path which led to a ferry across the Muskingum river.

One was a powerful, athletic young man, with a countenance strikingly handsome, and embrowned by exercise and exposure; his dress was a hunting shirt, and leggings of deer-skin; his curling brown locks escaped from under a cap of wolf-skin; and his mocassins, firmly secured round the ankle, were made from the tough hide of a bear; he carried in his hand a short rifle of heavy calibre and an ornamented souteau-de-chasse hung at his belt. His companion lower in stature, but broad, sinewy, and weather-beaten, seemed to be some fifteen or twenty years the elder; his dress was of the same material, but more soiled and worn; his rifle was longer and heavier; and his whole appearance that of a man to whom all inclemencies of season were indifferent, all the dangers and hardships of a western hunter's life familiar; but the most remarkable part of his equipment was an enormous axe, the handle studded with nails, and the head firmly riveted with iron hoops.

"Well Master Reginald" said the latter; "we must hope to find old Michael and his ferry-boat at the Passage des Rochers, for the river is much swollen, and we might not easily swim it with dry powder."

"What reason have you to doubt old Michael's being found at his post!" said Reginald; "we have often crossed there, and have seldom found him absent."

"True, master; but he has of late become very lazy; and he prefers sitting by his fire, and exchanging a bottle of fire-water with a strolling Ingian for half a dozen good skins, to tugging a great flat-bottomed boat across the Muskingum during the March floods."

"Baptiste," said the young man, "it grieves me to see the reckless avidity with which spirits are sought by the Indians; and the violence, outrage, and misery which are the general consequence of their dram-drinking."

"Why you see, there is something very good in a cup of West Ingy rum;" here Baptiste's hard features were twisted into a grin irresistably comic, and he proceeded, "it warms the stomach and the heart; and the savages, when they once taste it, suck at a bottle by instinct, as natural as a six-weeks cub at his dam: I often wonder, Master Reginald, why you spoil that fine *eau de vie* which little Perrot puts into your hunting flask, by mixing with it a quantity of water! In my last trip to the mountains, where I was first guide and turpret,* they gave me a taste now and then, and I never found it do me harm; but the nature of an Ingian is different, you know."

"Well, Baptiste," said Reginald, smiling at his follower's defence of his favourite beverage; "I will say, that I never knew you to take more than you could carry; but your head is as strong as your back, and you sometimes prove the strength of both."

The conversation was suddenly interrupted by the report of Reginald's rifle, and a grey squirrel fell from the top of a hickory, where he was feasting in fancied security. Baptiste took up the little animal, and having examined it attentively, shook his head gravely, saying, "Master Reginald, there is not a quicker eye, nor a truer hand in the Territory, but—"

As he hesitated to finish the sentence, Reginald added laughing, "but—but—I am an obstinate fellow, because I will not exchange my favourite German rifle, with its heavy bullet, for a long Virginia barrel, with a ball like a pea; is it not so, Baptiste?"

The guide's natural good-humour struggled with prejudices which, on this subject, had been more than once wounded by his young companion, as he replied, "Why, Master Reginald, the deer, whose saddle is on my shoulder, found my pea hard enough to swallow, and look here, at this poor little vermint you have just killed,—there is a hole in his neck big enough to let the life out of a grisly bear; you have hit him nearly an inch farther back than I taught you to aim before you went across the great water, and learnt all kinds of British and German notions?"

Reginald smiled at the hunter's characteristic reproof, and replied in a tone of kindness, "Well, Baptiste, all that I do know of tracking a deer, or lining a bee, or of bringing down one of these little vermint, I learned first from you; and if I am a promising pupil, the credit is due to Baptiste, the best hunter in forest or prairie!"

A glow of pleasure passed over the guide's sunburnt countenance; and grasping in his hard and horny fingers his young master's hand, he said, "Thank'ee, Master Reginald; and as for me, though I'm only a poor 'Coureur des bois,'* I a'nt feared to back my pupil against any man that walks, from Dan Boone, of Kentucky, to Bloody-hand, the great war-chief of the Cayugas."

As he spoke, they came in sight of the river, and the blue smoke curling up among the trees, showed our travellers that they had not missed their path to Michael's log-house and ferry. "What have we here?" exclaimed Baptiste, catching his companion by the arm; "'tis even as I told you: the old rogue is smoking his pipe over a glass of brandy in his kitchen corner; and there is a wild-looking Indian pulling himself across with three horses in that crazy batteau, almost as old and useless as its owner!"

"He will scarcely reach the opposite bank," said Reginald; "the river is muddy and swollen with melted snow, and his horses seem disposed to be unquiet passengers."

They had now approached near enough to enable them to distinguish the features of the Indian in the boat; the guide scanned them with evident surprise and interest, the result of which was, a noise that broke from him, something between a grunt and a whistle, as he muttered, "What can have brought *him* here?"

"Do you know that fine-looking fellow, then?" inquired Reginald.

"Know him, Master Reginald!—does 'Wolf' know Miss Lucy?—does a bear know a bee-tree?—I should know him among a thousand Red-skins, though he were twice as well disguised. Tête-bleu, master, look at those wild brutes how they struggle; he and they will taste Muskingum water before long."

* "*Anglice* "Interpreter."

* "Coureur des bois," an appellation often given to a Canadian and half-breed Woodsman.

While he was speaking one of the horses reared, another kicked furiously, the shallow flat boat was upset, and both they and the Indian fell headlong into the river; they had been secured together by a "laryette" or thong of hide, which unfortunately came athwart the Indian's shoulder, and thus he was held below the water, while the struggles of the frightened animals rendered it impossible for him to extricate himself. "He is entangled in the laryette," said the guide; "nothing can save him," he added in a grave and sadder tone. "'Tis a noble youth, and I would have wished him a braver death! What are you doing, Master Reginald?—are you mad? No man can swim in that torrent. For your father's sake—"

But his entreaties and attempts to restrain his impetuous companion were fruitless, for Reginald had already thrown on the ground his leathern hunting shirt, his rifle, and ammunition; and shaking off the grasp of the guide as if the latter had been a child, he plunged into the river, and swam to the spot where the feebler struggles of the horses showed that they were now almost at the mercy of the current. When he reached them, Reginald dived below the nearest, and dividing the laryette with two or three successful strokes of his knife, brought the exhausted Indian to the surface; for a moment, he feared that he had come too late; but on inhaling a breath of air, the Redskin seemed to regain both consciousness and strength, and was able in his turn to assist Reginald, who had received, when under water, a blow on the head from the horse's hoof, the blood flowing fast from the wound; short but expressive was the greeting exchanged as they struck out for the bank which one of the horses had already gained; another was bruised, battered, and tossed about among some shelving rocks lower down the river; and the third was fast hurried towards the same dangerous spot, when the Indian, uttering a shrill cry, turned and swam again towards this, his favourite horse, and by a great exertion of skill and strength, brought it to a part of the river where the current was less rapid, and thence led it safely ashore.

These events had passed in less time than their narration has occupied, and the whole biped and quadruped party now stood drenched and dripping on the bank. The two young men gazed at each other in silence, with looks of mingled interest and admiration; indeed, if a sculptor had desired to place together two different specimens of youthful manhood, in which symmetry and strength were to be gracefully united, he could scarcely have selected two finer models: in height they might be about equal; and though the frame and muscular proportions of Reginald were more powerful, there was a roundness and compact knitting of the joints, and a sinewy suppleness in the limbs of his new acquaintance, such as he thought he had never seen equalled in statuary or in life. The Indian's gaze was so fixed and piercing, that Reginald's eye wandered more than once from his countenance to the belt, where his war-club was still suspended by a thong, the scalp-knife in its sheath, and near it a scalp, evidently that of a white man, and bearing the appearance of having been recently taken.

With a slight shudder of disgust, he raised his eyes again to the chiselled features of the noble-looking being before him, and felt assured that though they might be those of a savage warrior, they could not be those of a lurking assassin. The Indian now moved a step forward, and taking Reginald's hand, placed it upon his own heart, saying distinctly in English, "My brother!"

Reginald understood and appreciated this simple expression of gratitude and friendship; he imitated his new friend's action, and evinced, both by his looks and the kindly tones of his voice, the interest which, to his own surprise, the Indian had awakened in his breast.

At this juncture they were joined by the guide, who had paddled himself across in a canoe that he found at the ferry, which was two hundred yards above the spot where they now stood. At his approach, the young Indian resumed his silent attitude of repose; while apparently unconscious of his presence, Baptiste poured upon his favourite a mingled torrent of reproofs and congratulations.

"Why, Master Reginald, did the mad spirit possess you to jump into the Muskingum, and dive like an otter, where the water was swift and dark as the Niagara rapids! Pardie, though, it was bravely done! another minute, and our Redskin friend would have been in the hunting-ground of his forefathers. Give me your hand, master; I love you better than ever! I had a mind to take a duck myself after ye; but thought, if bad luck came, I might serve ye better with the canoe." While rapidly uttering these broken sentences, he handed to Reginald the hunting-shirt, rifle, and other things, which he had brought over in the canoe, and wrung the water out of his cap, being all the time in a state of ill-dissembled excitement. This done, he turned to the young Indian, who was standing aside, silent and motionless. The guide scanned his features with a searching look, and then muttered audibly, "I knew it must be he."

A gleam shot from the dark eye of the Indian, proving that he heard and understood the phrase, but not a word escaped his lips.

Reginald, unable to repress his curiosity, exclaimed, "Must be who, Baptiste? Who is my Indian friend—my brother?"

A lurking smile played round the mouth of the guide, as he said in a low tone to the Indian, "Does the paint on my brother's face tell a tale? is his path in the night? must his name dwell between shut lips?"

To this last question the Indian, moving forward with that peculiar grace and innate dignity which characterized all his movements, replied, "The War-Eagle hides his name from none: his cry is heard from far, and his path is strait: a dog's scalp is at his belt!" Here he paused a moment; and added, in a softened tone, "But the Red Spirit prevailed; the waters were too strong for him; the swimming-warrior's knife came; and again the War-Eagle saw the light."

"And found a brother—is it not so?" added Reginald.

"It is so!" replied the Indian: and there was a depth of pathos in the tone of his voice as he spoke, which convinced Reginald that those words came from the heart.

"There were three horses with you in the bac," said the guide: "two are under yonder trees;—where is the third?"

"Dead, among those rocks below the rapids," answered War-Eagle, quietly. "He was a fool, and was taken from a fool, and both are now together:" as he spoke he pointed scornfully to the scalp which hung at his belt.

Reginald and Baptiste interchanged looks of uneasy curiosity, and then directing their eyes towards the distant spot indicated by the Indian, they distinguished the battered carcass of the animal, partly hid by the water, and partly resting against the rock, which prevented it from floating down with the current.

The party now turned towards the horses among the trees; which, after enjoying themselves by rolling in the grass, were feeding, apparently unconscious of their double misdemeanour in having first upset the bac, and then nearly drowned their master by their struggles in the water. As Reginald and his two companions approached, an involuntary exclamation of admiration burst from him.

"Heavens, Baptiste! did you ever see so magnificent a creature as that with the laryette round his neck? And what a colour! it seems between chestnut and black! Look at his short, wild head, his broad forehead, his bold eye, and that long silky mane falling below his shoulder! Look, also, at his short back and legs! Why, he has the beauty of a barb joined to the strength of an English hunter!"

It may be well imagined that the greater portion of this might have been a soliloquy, as Baptiste understood but few, the Indian none, of the expressions which Reginald uttered with enthusiastic rapidity; both, however, understood enough to know that he was admiring the animal, and both judged that his admiration was not misplaced.

Our hero (for so we must denominate Reginald Brandon) approached to handle and caress the horse; but the latter, with erect ears and expanded nostrils, snorted an indignant refusal of these civilities, and trotted off, tossing high his mane as if in defiance of man's dominion. At this moment, the War-Eagle uttered a shrill, peculiar cry, when immediately the obedient horse came to his side, rubbing his head against his master's shoulder, and courting those caresses which he had so lately and so scornfully refused from Reginald.

While the docile and intelligent animal thus stood beside him, a sudden ray of light sparkled in the Indian's eye, as with rapid utterance, not unmingled with gesticulation, he said, "The War-Eagle's path was toward the evening sun; his tomahawk drank the Comanchee's blood; the wild horse was swift, and strong, and fierce; the cunning man on the evening prairie said he was *Nekimi*,*—'the Great Spirit's angry breath;' but the War-Eagle's neck-bullet struck"—

At this part of the narrative, the guide, carried away by the enthusiasm of the scene described, ejaculated in the Delaware tongue, That was bravely done!"

For a moment the young Indian paused; and then, with increased rapidity and vehemence, told in his own language how he had captured and subdued the horse; which faithful creature, seemingly anxious to bear witness to the truth of his master's tale, still sought and returned his caresses. The Indian, however, was not thereby deterred from the purpose which had already made his eye flash with pleasure. Taking the thong in his hand, and placing it in that of Reginald, he said, resuming the English tongue, "The War-Eagle gives Nekimi to his brother. The white warrior may hunt the mastoche,* he may overtake his enemies, he may fly from the prairie-fire when the wind is strong: Nekimi never tires!"

Reginald was so surprised at this unexpected offer, that he felt much embarrassed, and hesitated whether he ought not to decline the gift. Baptiste saw a cloud gathering on the Indian's brow, and said in a low voice to his master in French, "You must take the horse; a refusal would mortally offend him." Our hero accordingly accompanied his expression of thanks with every demonstration of satisfaction and affection. Again War-Eagle's face brightened with pleasure; but the effect upon Nekimi seemed to be very different, for he stoutly resisted his new master's attempts at approach or acquaintance, snorting and backing at every step made by Reginald in advance.

"The white warrior must learn to speak to Nekimi," said the Indian, quietly; and he again repeated the short, shrill cry before noticed. In vain our hero tried to imitate the sound; the horse's ears remained deaf to his voice, and it seemed as if his new acquisition could prove but of little service to him.

War-Eagle now took Reginald aside, and smeared his hands with some grease taken from a small bladder in his girdle, and on his extending them again towards the horse, much of the fear and dislike evinced by the latter disappeared. As soon as the animal would permit Reginald to touch it, the Indian desired him to hold its nostril firmly in his hand, and placing his face by the horse's head, to look up steadfastly into its eye for several minutes, speaking low at intervals to accustom it to his voice; he assured him that in a few days Nekimi would through this treatment become docile and obedient.

CHAPTER VI.

Reginald and Baptiste pay a visit to War-eagle.—An attempt at treachery meets with summary punishment.

The other horse being now secured, the party prepared to resume their journey; and as it appeared after a few words whispered between the Indian and the guide, that their routes were in the same direction, they struck into the forest, Baptiste leading, followed by Reginald, and War-Eagle bringing up the rear with the two horses.

After walking a few minutes in silence, "Baptiste," said our hero in French, "what was the story told about the horse? I understood little of what he said in English, and none of what he spoke in his own tongue."

* *Nekimi is the Delaware for* "Thunder"

* In the Delaware language this expression seems applicable to any large swift animal, as it is given to the elk the buffalo, &c

"He told us, Master Reginald, that he was out on a war-party against the Camanchees, a wild tribe of Indians in the South-west; they steal horses from the Mexicans, and exchange them with the *Arícaras*, Kioways, Pawnees, and other Missouri Indians."

"Well, Baptiste, how did he take this swift horse with his 'neck-bullet,' as he called it?"

"That, Master Reginald, is the most difficult shot in the prairie; and I have known few Redskins up to it. The western hunters call it 'creasing:'—a ball must be shot just on the upper edge of the spine where it enters the horse's neck; if it is exactly done, the horse falls immediately, and is secured, then the wound is afterwards healed; but, if the ball strikes an inch lower, the spine is missed, or the horse is killed. Few Redskins can do it," muttered the guide, "and the 'doctor' here," shaking his long rifle, "has failed more than once; but War-Eagle has said it, and there are no lies in *his* mouth."

"Tell me, Baptiste," said Reginald, earnestly; "tell me something about my brother's history, his race, and exploits."

"Afterwards, my young master. I know not that he understands us now; but these Indians are curious critturs in hearing; I believe if you spoke in that strange Dutch lingo which you learnt across the water, the Redskins would know how to answer you—stay," he added, putting his rifle to his shoulder, "here is work for the doctor."

Reginald looked in the direction of the piece, but saw nothing; and the guide, while taking his aim, still muttered to himself, "the pills are very small, but they work somewhat sharp." Pausing a moment, he drew the trigger; and a sudden bound from under a brake, at fifty yards distance, was the last death-spring of the unlucky deer whose lair had not escaped the hunter's practised eye.

"Bravely shot," shouted Reginald; "what says War-Eagle?"

"Good," replied the Indian.

"Nay," said Baptiste; "there was not much in the shot; but your French waly-de-sham might have walked past those bushes without noting the twinkle of that crittur's eye. Our Redskin friend saw it plain enough I warrant you," he added, with an inquiring look.

"War-Eagle's path is not on the deer track," said the young chief, with a stern gravity.

In a very few minutes an additional load of venison was across the sturdy shoulders of the guide, and the party resumed their march in silence.

They had not proceeded far, when the Indian halted, saying, "War-Eagle's camp is near; will my white brother eat and smoke?—the sun is high, he can then return to his great wigwam."

Reginald, who was anxious to see more of his new friend, and in whom the morning's exercise had awakened a strong relish for a slice of broiled venison, assented at once, and desired him to lead the way.

As he was still followed by the two horses, War-Eagle was somewhat in advance of his companions, and Baptiste whispered in French, "Beware, Master Reginald—you may fall into a trap."

"For shame," said the latter, colouring with indignation; "can you suspect treachery in *him*? Did you not yourself say he could not lie!"

"Your reproof is undeserved," said the cool and wary hunter; "War-Eagle may not be alone, there may be turkey-buzzards with him."

"If there be a score of vultures," said Reginald, "I will follow him without fear—he would not lead us into harm."

"Perhaps you are right," was the guide's answer; and again the party resumed their march in silence.

They soon arrived at a place where the forest was less densely wooded; some of the larger trees appeared to have been overthrown by a hurricane, and some of the lesser to have fallen by the axe. Nekimi trotted forward, as if making for a spot that he recognised, and the Indian recalled him with the same cry that he had before used, adding, however, another, and a shriller sound.

The guide shook his head, and muttered something inaudibly between his teeth, loosening at the same time the huge axe in his belt, and throwing his long rifle over his arm, ready for immediate use.

These preparations did not escape the observation of Reginald; and although he said nothing, he felt more uneasy than he cared to own; for it struck him that if the guide, who seemed to have so high an opinion of War-Eagle, was apprehensive of treachery or of some unforeseen danger, there was less ground for his own confidence.

Meantime the Indian walked composedly forward until he reached the *camp*,*—a pretty spot, sheltered on the windward side by a laurel thicket, and on the other commanding a view of the open glade, and of a small stream winding its silent course towards the river which our party had so lately left.

On a grassy plot, between two venerable trees, the embers of a smouldering fire sent up the thin blue vapour which rises from the burning of green wood, several logs of which were still piled for fuel; while sundry bones and feathers, scattered at no great distance, gave sufficient evidence of recent feasting.

War-Eagle glanced hastily around his camp; and leaving Nekimi to feed at liberty, secured the less tractable horse; while he was thus employed, the guide whispered in a low voice, "There are three or four Indians here! I trace their marks on the grass, and I know it by this fire; it is a war party—there are no squaws here; Master Reginald, keep your ears and eyes open, but show no distrust; if he offers a pipe, all may yet be right."

Although the guide said this so distinctly that Reginald heard every syllable, he was to all appearance busily engaged in throwing some dry sticks on the fire, and easing himself of the skins and the venison with which he was loaded. The Indian now took from a hollow in one of the old trees before-mentioned, a pipe, the bowl of which was of red sandstone, and the

* Among the western hunters any resting-place for the night, or even where a fire has been made for a mid-day halt, though it may be by one individual, is commonly called "a camp." This must be borne in mind throughout the following tale.

stick painted and ornamented with stained porcupine quills; he also drew out a leather bag of *Kinne-kinek*;* and having filled and lighted his pipe, seated himself at a short distance from the fire, and gravely invited Reginald to sit on his right, and the guide on his left. As soon as they were seated, War-Eagle inhaled a large volume of smoke; and looking reverently up to the sky, sent forth a long whiff, as an offering to the Great Spirit; then simply saying, "My brother is welcome," he passed the pipe to Reginald, and afterwards to Baptiste.

For some time they smoked in silence: not a sound was heard but the crackling of the wood on the fire, and the occasional chirrup of a robin in the neighbouring bushes; this silent system not suiting Reginald's ardent temperament, he abruptly addressed the Indian as follows:

"Has my brother come far from his people?"

A cloud gathered on the chief's brow, and the guide thought that a storm of wrath would be excited by this unlucky question; but the Indian looking steadily upon the frank open countenance of the speaker, replied in a voice rather melancholy than fierce, "War-Eagle has few people: the bones of his fathers are *not far!*"

Our hero anxious to dismiss a subject which seemed painful to his new friend, turned the conversation to his equipment, and observed, "My brother walks abroad without fear; he is almost without arms."

The Indian carelessly resting his hand upon his war-club, said (speaking rather to himself than to his companions), "It has tasted blood: ask the Dahcotahs!"

"The Dahcotahs are dogs," said the guide angrily. "Their skins are red, but their hearts are white!"

War-Eagle turning upon him a penetrating look, continued, "Grande-Hâche is a warrior; he has smoked, has feasted, has fought among the *Lenape*;* he has struck more than one Dahcotah chief. But the Grande-Hâche cannot rest: the scalp of his mother hangs in the lodge of the *Assiniboins*;† her spirit is unquiet in the dark hunting-ground."

The guide made no reply, but the forced compression of his lips, and the muscular contraction that passed over his sinewy frame, showed how deeply he cherished that vengeance which the Indian's word awakened.

"This is, then," said our hero to himself, "the cause of that fierce unextinguishable hate which Baptiste has always borne to these Sioux; I cannot wonder at it." Reginald continued, however, his conversation respecting his new friend's equipment, in the same tone: "My brother's war-club is strong, and that iron spike in its head is sharp; but the rifle kills from far, and the white men are not all friends to him."

"War-Eagle has ears and eyes; he can see snakes in the grass," was the calm reply.

"Nay, but my brother is careless," said Reginald laughing; "Grande-Hâche, as you call him, and I are two men, both strong and armed with rifles: if we were not his brothers, the War-Eagle would be in danger."

"The bad Spirit made the thick water and the horses too strong for War-Eagle," said the latter, referring to the morning's accident, "but he could not be hurt by his brother's rifle."

"And why so?" demanded Reginald.

"Because," said the Indian, "the white warrior has smoked, has taken his brother's gift, and the Great Spirit has written on his face that he cannot speak lies."

"You are right, my brave friend," said Reginald, (not a little gratified by the untutored compliment;) "but if you fall in with white men who carry rifles, and who *do* speak lies—how fares it with you then?"

"War-Eagle is always ready" said he, in the same unmoved tone; "the Grande-Hâche is a great warrior—my brother will take many scalps; yet *if* their tongues were forked—*if* their hearts were bad—both would die where they now sit—they have neither ears nor eyes—but the Lenape is a chief, they are as safe here as in the great white village."

Though inwardly nettled at this taunt, which he felt to be not altogether undeserved, the guide took no other notice of it than to strain to the utmost those organs of sight and hearing which the Redskin had held so cheap, but in vain: the forest around them seemed wrapt in solitude and silence; the eyes of Reginald, however, served him better on this occasion. "By heaven, the Indian speaks truth," said he; "I see them plainly—one, two, three! and we Baptiste, are at their mercy."

This he spoke in French, and the guide answered in the same language: "Do you see Indians, Master Reginald, where I can see naught but trees, and logs, and grass; if it is so—I am an owl, and no hunter!"

"Glance your eye," said our hero, calmly, to yon old fallen log, that lies fifty or sixty yards to your right, there are three small parallel lines visible there,—they are three gun-barrels; the sun shone on them a minute since, and their muzzles are directed full upon us."

"It is true; your eyes are younger than mine, I suppose," said the guide, apparently more disconcerted at that circumstance than at the imminent peril of their situation. He added, in a low, determined tone, "but they must shoot very true, if they wish to prevent me from taking this deep and deceitful villain with me on the long journey."

During the whole of this conversation, War Eagle sat in unmoved silence, occasionally puffing out a whiff from the fragrant herb in his pipe. Reginald met the unexpected danger with the straightforward, daring courage which was the characteristic of his mind; Baptiste with the cool resolution which was the result of a life of perils, stratagems, and escapes.

"War-Eagle," said the former, "you speak true; Grand-Hâche and I have shut our eyes and ears; but they are now open; I see your warriors."

The Indian turned his searching eye full upon

* *Kinne-kinek* is a mixture made by the Indians from the inner bark of the willow pounded small, tobacco, and the dried leaves of the sumach: the flavour of this composition is by no means disagreeable; the word itself is Delaware, but the mixture is in common use among many tribes.

* The Delawares call themselves Lenni-Lenape,—"the ancient or original people."

† *Assiniboins*—the "stone heaters"—a powerful and warlike branch of the great Dahcotah or Sioux nation.

the speaker; he met a look bold, open, fearless as his own. "Where can my white brother see warriors?" he inquired.

"Their guns are across yonder log," said Reginald; "and their muzzles are pointed here."

"It is so," said War-Eagle; "the red men are on the war-path; they seek blood; is my white brother not afraid?"

"War-Eagle is a chief," replied the young man; "he cannot lie,—he has said that his white brother is as safe as in the wigwam of his father!"

Again the Indian bent a scrutinizing look upon the countenance of the speaker, and again met the same smile of fearless confidence. With more emotion than he had yet shown, he said, 'The Great Spirit has given to my white brother the big heart of a Lenape!"

He now made a signal to his ambuscade to come forth, on which they started up from behind the large fallen tree which had hitherto screened them, and advanced slowly towards the camp. They were three in number; two of them active looking men, of moderate stature, but of symmetrical proportions; the third a lad, apparently about seventeen years old; the faces of the two former were painted with black stripes, which gave them an appearance at once fierce and grotesque; they were lightly clad in hunting shirts, leggins, and mocassins, all of elk-skin, and each carried a tomahawk, scalp-knife, and the gun before mentioned; the young lad carried no other weapon but the gun; his hunting-shirt was fancifully ornamented with tassels of porcupine quills, and was fastened at the waist by a belt studded with party-coloured beads; his leggins were fringed, and his mocassins were also braided with the quills of the porcupine; in figure he was slight and tall; as he drew near, Reginald thought his countenance even more remarkable than that of War-Eagle; indeed its beauty would have been almost effeminate, had it not been for the raven blackness of the hair, and the piercing fire of the dark eyes. The three came forward in silence, the lad being rather in advance of the others, and stood before the War-Eagle.

He bade them in his own language to be seated, and smoke the pipe with the white men. They did so, with the exception of the lad, who not being yet a warrior, passed it untouched; and when it had gone round, War-Eagle harangued his party; as he narrated the events of the morning, Reginald was struck by the deep and flexible modulation of his voice; and although he did not understand a word of the language, fancied that he knew when the chief related his immersion and subsequent preservation by the white man's knife.

At this portion of the tale, the Indian youth made no attempt to conceal his emotion; his glistening eyes were fixed upon the speaker, and every feature of his intelligent countenance beamed with affectionate interest: as War-Eagle described his being struck under water, stunned by a blow from a horse's foot, and that the thick water covered him, a hurried exclamation escaped from the boy's lips; and when his chief related how the white warrior had dived, had cut the cord in which he was entangled, and had brought him again to the air and to life, the youth, *no longer able* to control his feelings, threw himself into Reginald's arms, exclaiming in good English,

"The Great Spirit reward the white warrior: he has given me back my chief—my brother!"

Our hero was no less astonished than was the guide, at such uncontrolled emotion in a youth of a nation so early taught to conceal their feelings; nor were they less surprised at the clearness and purity of accent with which he expressed himself in English.

"I only did, my boy," said Reginald, kindly, "what you would have done had you been in my place."

"You are a great warrior," said the youth, running his eye over the powerful frame beside him: "Wingenund would have gone into the strong river, and would have died with the War-Eagle."

"Is Wingenund, then, your name, my brave boy?"

"It was my forefather's name," said the youth, proudly. "I have yet no name: but War-Eagle says I may have one soon, and I will have no other."

"I feel sure you well deserve your forefather's name," said Reginald. "What does it mean in my language?"

"It means 'The Beloved!'"

"The youth speaks true," murmured the guide (who, though busily engaged in rounding off a bullet with his knife, lost not a word or gesture that passed), "he speaks only truth; I knew his forefather well: a braver and better heart never dwelt among the Lenapé."

The boy looked gratefully at the weather-beaten hunter; and as he cast his eyes down in silence, it would have been difficult to say whether pleasure, pride, or pain, predominated in their expression.

"Tell me," resumed Reginald, "how come you to speak English like a white man?"

"The good father and Olitipa taught me."

Reginald looked at the guide for an explanation; that worthy personage shook his head, saying, "The boy talks riddles; but they are not hard to guess. The good-father must be some missionary, or priest; and Olitipa would in their tongue signify 'pretty prairie-fowl;' so it is probably the name of a Delaware woman—perhaps his sister."

"*Kehella lâ*—so it is," said the boy: "Olitipa is in your tongue 'pretty prairie-bird,' and she is my sister."

"Where is Prairie-bird?" inquired Reginald, amused by the youth's *naiveté*..

"Far, far away, beyond the great river! But we will go back soon;—shall we not?" he inquired, looking up timidly at War-Eagle.

"*Pechu lenitti*,"* answered the chief; and leaning towards the youth, he added some words in a whisper, which made him start up to obey the orders he had received.

Reginald was not long left in ignorance of their nature, as in a few minutes the active lad had refreshed the fire, and was busy in broiling some venison steaks, which, after the exercise of the morning, sent up a steam far from unpleasant to the senses of any of those present.

"Master Reginald," said the guide, "that

* "By-and-by," or "soon"

ally perroquet of yours, Gustave Perrot, is always telling fine stories of what he has seen in Europe, and talking of the scent of roses, and the sweet sounds of music, till the girls in the clearing think he's a book-author and a poet; did you ever smell any scent, or hear any music, sweeter than comes from the hissing and frizzing of those slices of fat venison after a six hours' hunt in the woods?"

"Perhaps not," said Reginald, laughing; "but we are only hunters, and Monsieur Perrot is a man of taste."

"Whom have we here?" grumbled the guide, as an Indian appeared in the distance "Friend War-Eagle, is this another of your band?"

"He is," replied the chief: "all are now here."

The new-comer was a powerful, athletic-looking man; his face was painted one half black, and the other half striped with bars of red; the sleeves of his hunting-shirt were so short and loose, that his naked arms were visible, one of which was tatooed in the form of a lizard, and on the other he wore an armlet of brass; his leggins and mocassins were soiled and torn, and the perspiration streaming from his matted hair shewed that he had travelled both far and fast. He was, like the rest, equipped with rifle, tomahawk, and scalp-knife; his countenance, as far as it could be distinguished through its disguise of paint, was expressive of cunning and ferocity. Though probably much surprised at seeing two white men sitting thus amicably with his chief, he took little notice of them, or of the rest of the party; but without asking, or being asked, any questions, seated himself on the opposite side of the fire, lighted his pipe, and smoked.

"Master Reginald," said the guide, in French, "I do not like that fellow. I know not how he comes to be with our friend here, for he belongs to another tribe: I have seen him before."

Meantime, the industrious lad had broiled his venison steaks, and having gathered some broad leaves, which served on this occasion for plates, he brought the first slice to Reginald, the second to Baptiste, the next to War-Eagle, and so on, until he went through the party; after which, without tasting anything himself, he took his station close to his chief and his new friend. During the meal, the Indian last arrived talked much in a suppressed voice to the one next to him, and seemed studiously to avert his eyes from his chief and the two white men.

"Tarhé," said War-Eagle, addressing him, "is there not *tassmanané** for the stranger? he is my brother, and his path has been long."

Tarhé went to his "cache," a spot not many yards distant, and taking out two or three small cakes, brought them round behind his chief, and offered one to our hero, who was in the act of receiving it, when the miscreant, drawing the knife from his girdle, aimed a blow at the back of the unsuspecting Reginald.

Nothing could have saved him from instant death, had not the gallant boy thrown himself between the savage and his victim. The knife went through his arm; and so deadly was the force by which it was guided, that it still descended, and inflicted a slight scratch on Reginald's shoulder.

War-Eagle sprang like a tiger from the ground, and with one blow of his tremendous war-club dashed the ruffian to the earth; then turning suddenly his angry glance upon the two other Indians, he asked if they had any part in Tarhé's plot. Neither had stirred from his seat, and both declared they had known nothing of his intention. It was well for them that the chief believed them, for this act of vile treachery had aroused all the slumbering fire within him, and the veins started like blue cords upon his temples.

Reginald's first impulse, when he jumped upon his feet, was to hasten to the wounded youth, whose features were now lighted up by a smile of happiness. "Tell me, my brave generous boy, are you much hurt?"

"No," said he: "I should have been hurt if the War-Eagle's camp had been stained with the blood of his white brother."

The sturdy guide himself could not repress his admiration of this gallant boy's conduct, who now stood looking intently upon War-Eagle, his features animated by excitement and by pride, and the knife still fixed up to the very handle in his arm.

"War-Eagle," said Baptiste, "the Lenapé are men,—their boys are warriors: that dog is not a Lenape," he added, pointing to the prostrate body of Tarhé.

"*Tah-Delamattenos*,"* said the chief indignantly. The youth now moving a step forward, came before his chief with an air of modest dignity, and slowly drew the reeking knife from his arm, while a stream of blood gushed from the wound; not a muscle of his frame trembled, not a feature varied its expression, as he said in a voice of musical gentleness, "War-Eagle, will Wingenund allow his grandson now to bear his name?"

"*Wingenund!*" said War-Eagle, looking upon him with affectionate pride, "the chiefs at the Council-fire shall know that the blood of the well-beloved still flows in a young warrior's veins."

"My good friend," said the guide to the chief, "you have no time to lose, the lad will bleed to death!"

Reginald sprang forward, and closing as he best could the gaping wound, bound his handkerchief tightly over it.

There was, indeed, no time to be lost; for the blood had flowed more freely than his youthful frame could endure. A painful dizziness came over him; and murmuring almost inaudibly "The White Warrior is safe, and Wingenund is happy," he fell senseless into Reginald's arms.

* *Tassmanané: a kind of bread made by the Delawares for long journeys. It is made of maize, powdered very fine, and sweetened with maple sugar.*

* "Tah-Delamattenos,"—"No, he is a Wyandot." This tribe occupied the region to the north of Ohio, and the north-west of Pennsylvania; they spoke a dialect of the Iroquois, and are better known by the name of Hurons they sometimes hunted with the Delaware, by whom they were designated as above.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing some particulars of the history of the two Delawares and of Baptiste. The latter returns with Reginald to Mooshaane, the residence of Colonel Brandon.

"I FEAR he will die!" said Reginald in a tone of the deepest grief, as he stooped over the inanimate form of the wounded boy.

"Die!" said the War-Eagle, almost fiercely, 'yes, he will die! but not by the bite of yonder serpent," pointing to the body of the Wyandot; "he will die when the Great Spirit orders it; but before he dies, the murderers of his father shall hear his war-whoop! His tomahawk shall be red in their blood; their scalps shall hang at his belt! *then* Wingenund may go to his ancient people in the happy hunting fields!"

"My brother," said Reginald earnestly, and still supporting the insensible frame of Wingenund, "do not lead this youth to shed the white man's blood! He cannot call back those who are gone! We have a book which the Great Spirit gave to our forefathers; it speaks His own words, and He tells us, 'Vengeance is mine;' and He also tells us that if we would please Him, we must forgive those who have injured us; His arrows are very sharp; His anger is fierce; His justice is sure. Leave Him to punish those bad men, and teach the 'well-beloved' to be the white man's friend."

For a minute the chief seemed buried in deep thought; then suddenly starting from his reverie, he spoke a few words in a low tone to one of his men, who instantly moved away, and disappeared in the forest.

War-Eagle then replied in a tone rather of melancholy than of reproof, "The Great Spirit never speaks to the red man in words: if He is angry, He thunders; if He is pleased, He sends rain and sunshine, to make the corn and fruits to grow, and sweet grass to fatten the deer; my brother says the Great Spirit has spoken plainly to the white man in words, and that those words are painted in a book. War-Eagle believes it, because my brother's tongue is not forked; but he would ask,—Did those white men, who came in the night like wolves to the couch of the fawn, who murdered the father, the kindred, the little sisters of Wingenund,—did those men hear the Great Spirit's words?"

"My brother," said Reginald, "there are among white men many wolves and serpents: men whose hands are bloody, and their tongue forked. The Great Spirit does not forbid to punish, or even to kill such men, in defence of ourselves, our wigwams, our children, or our friend; He is not angry with War-Eagle for striking down that Huron whose hand was raised to shed his brother's blood; but when the grass of many seasons has grown over the graves of those who were injured, then the Great Spirit commands man to let his anger sleep, to bury his hatchet, and to forgive."

"It may be so," said War-Eagle gravely, "the Good Father in the Western Hunting-ground has said the same; Olitipa, whose voice is like the mocking-bird, and who speaks only truth, she has spoken the same; but it is very dark, War-Eagle cannot see it."

"Who is the Prairie-bird?" inquired Reginald, whose curiosity had twice been excited by the mention of this extraordinary name.

Before the chief could reply, the Indian, whom he had sent, returned with a mess made from several leaves, herbs, and roots, which he had bruised and reduced to a kind of glutinous pulp; War-Eagle now took off the bandage from the youth's arm; after examining it carefully, and applying some of the above mixtures to both the orifices of the wound, he bound it again, more strongly and skilfully than before; then taking him in his arms, as if he had been a little child, he carried him down to the rivulet; and by dint of bathing his temples and rubbing forcibly his hands and feet, soon restored the suspended animation.

When he was recovered so far as to be able to speak, Reginald, sitting down by him, said a thousand kind things to him, such as were prompted by the gratitude of a generous heart.

While they were conversing, the guide drew near to the chief; and pointing to the body of the Wyandot, which still lay where he had fallen, said, "He is surely dead!"

"He is so," replied the other gravely, "when War-Eagle is angry he does not strike his enemy's forehead twice."

The guide now turned over the body; and seeing that the iron point of the war-club had entered just above the eyes, and had sunk deep into the brain, he knew that instant death must have ensued. The chief calling the two Indians, desired them to bury the body where it would be safe from wolves and buzzards. "But," he added sternly, "let not the spot be marked for his kindred: he died like a dog, and none should lament him."

As they turned away to execute these orders, the guide observed to the chief "that Huron has not been long with the War-Eagle."

"True,—but how does the Grand-Hâche know it?"

"His eye has been on him more than once; Grande-Hâche sees, but he can hold his tongue."

"Grande-Hâche is a warrior," replied the chief: "he has seen many things; he has talked with the wise men; does he know why yon Huron wished to kill the young white brave?"

"He does," said Grande-Hâche; but as he did not of himself state what he knew, it would have been contrary to the usages of Indian courtesy to question him farther.

Baptiste now diverting the conversation to another topic, said, "It is singular that War-Eagle, on a war-path far from his village, should have only strangers with him, excepting the youth who is wounded!"

"What means the Grand-Hâche?"

"He means," replied the guide, "that the other two, now gone to bury the Huron, are *Southern men**—they are not Lenapé."

"Grande-Hâche has ears and eyes open—how can he know that he speaks truth!" said the chief.

"Because he *has* eyes and ears;" replied the guide. "Does War-Eagle think that Grande-Hâche has hunted twenty years among the red nations, and knows not yet the mocassin and

* Southern-men—in the Delaware language Cha-ouano or Shawano—known to the Americans as "Shawnees." This powerful tribe were generally in alliance with the Lenape, and inhabited the country on their western frontier. About the time of our tale, they were very numerous on the banks of the Muskingum and of the Wabash river.

tongue of a Shawanon? I knew them at a glance," he added, with a shrewd smile, "as well as I knew the War-Eagle in the batteau, though both he and they have put on their faces the paint of the *Mengwe*."*

"Grande-Hâche speaks truth," replied the chief, dryly, without showing the surprise and annoyance that he felt at the penetration of the guide. "The men are Shawanons, they hunt with the Lenapé, beyond the great river—they are brothers."

So saying, he broke off the conversation, and turning towards Wingenund, saw that he was talking as earnestly and freely with Reginald as if they had been long intimate; while he contemplated this friendly intercourse with a smile of satisfaction, the guide felt himself called upon to remind his companion that the sun was getting low, that they had yet some miles to walk, and that the colonel would be anxious and impatient.

"True," said Reginald, springing up, "I must take leave of my brother, and of my young preserver; but we shall meet again; we will hunt together, and be friends."

"Let it be so," said the lad, with an ardour which he cared not to conceal; "and Wingenund will tell Prairie-Bird that the white warrior who drew War-Eagle from the deep water, will come to see her, and she will thank him."

While the boy was speaking, the chief turned away, and busied himself in fastening a thong-halter firmly to the head of Nekimi, which he again led to his new master.

Reginald now undid from his waist the silver buckled belt with the couteau-de-chasse which it supported, and buckling it round the youth, he said, "Wingenund must wear this, and must not forget his white friend."

The boy's eyes sparkled with pleasure, as he received this gift; but he was still too weak to stand, and he only murmured, in a low voice, "Wingenund will not forget."

The chief now taking the guide aside, said to him, in his own language, "How is my white brother called?"

"I call him 'Master Reginald.'"†

After one or two ludicrous attempts at an imitation, War-Eagle shook his head, saying, "It is not good—may his Lenape friend call him 'Netis.'"

As soon as Reginald was informed of what had passed, and of the meaning of his new name, he accepted it with pleasure, and Wingenund repeated it again and again as our hero bid him farewell.

War-Eagle insisted upon accompanying him, and leading Nekimi through the forest, until they reached the broad wheel track which passed Colonel Brandon's house, and thence led through other clearings to the village of Marietta. As they went along, Reginald desired Baptiste in a whisper to talk with the chief, and endeavoured to draw from him, what article of dress, ornament, or use, he would most value, as he was anxious to make his Indian brother a present; and the guide, by skilfully manœuvring his conversation, soon learned that War Eagle had, on this last excursion, lost his rifle, and that he was also short of ammunition. They now emerged from the forest upon the great road, if it might be so called, leading to Marietta; and the Indian, putting the halter of Nekimi into Reginald's hand, said that he would return to his camp. Our hero, taking him by the hand, said, "Netis wishes to see his brother at this spot to-morrow at noon."

"War-Eagle will come," was the brief reply; and shaking both the whitemen cordially by the hand, he turned and disappeared among the trees.

Reginald and the guide were within a few miles of Colonel Brandon's house; but they could not proceed very fast, owing to the evident reluctance shown by Nekimi to follow his new master; he neighed, snorted, jumped, and played all manner of pranks in his endeavour to get loose; but this War-Eagle had foreseen, and the tough halter of undressed hide was well enough secured to defy all his efforts at escape.

"This has been a strange day of adventures, Baptiste," said Reginald; "it has been to me one of the pleasantest of my life!"

"Why, Master Reginald, it has been a day of events, such as they are; you have been twice at the outside edge of t'other world, with water and cold iron."

"Oh, there was not much harm in the water," said Reginald, laughing, "had it not been for the knock which one of the horses gave me on the head; but that villanous attempt of the Huron makes me shudder;—to offer a man food, and stab him while he is taking it! I thought such a thing was unknown in Indian history."

"It is, almost," said the guide. "But a Huron—and a Dacotah!" he added, bitterly,—"would murder a brother to gratify revenge."

"But I had never injured him, Baptiste."

"His memory is better than yours, Master Reginald. He and his brother were two of the leading warriors in that unfortunate affair where St.-Clair was beat by the Ingians, upon the north fork of the Miami. I was there, too, and the 'Doctor's' pills did some service—but not much to signify, neither. Colonel Brandon did all that a man could do, but, at last, he was forced back. Well, that Tarhé and his brother, first in the pursuit, killed two of our poor fellows, and were scalping 'em, when the Colonel called out to 'em, and fired. He killed Tarhé's brother dead. I see'd it all; and I took a long squint with the Doctor at Tarhé, which only lamed his arm a bit; for, you see, Master Reginald, I was a long ways off; and a chap don't shoot quite so fine when he's a retreatin' double quick, with a few hundred Redskins yellin' in his rear. However, that Tarhé has been more than once down at Marietta, and round the neighbours' clearins; and he knowed you, Master Reginald, just as well as a Kentucky hog knows an acorn."

"Now I understand it, so far, Baptiste. But if the fellow wanted to take my life, why did he not hide in the laurel-thicket, and shoot me as I passed? Why did he make the attempt where my death was sure to be revenged?"

"Now, Master Reginald, you are asking a

* Mengwe, or Mingoes,—the Delaware name for those Indians who resided chiefly in the northern States of the Union, and who are better known as the "Iroquois."

† "Master Reginald," might well puzzle the chief, as there is no letter R in the Delaware language, though *some of them* contrive to pronounce it.

"Netis" signifies in their tongue, "a trusted friend," *"one to whom all secrets are confided."*

poor ignorant crittur,—who knows nought but a little huntin', and, may be, knows a beaver-skin from a buffalo-hide,—all the ins and outs of a red Ingian's crooked mind! May be, he wanted to force War-Eagle into shedding white-man's blood. I saw that one of those Shawanons was up to his game; and if a general skrimmage had come, they'd have tried to do for me. Or, perhaps, when he found his knife so convenient to the back of your neck, he couldn't lose the chance, for the bad spirit had got hold of him."

"By heavens!" cried Reginald, "I never can sufficiently admire the quickness, and the heroic courage of that boy, Wingenund! Did you see, Baptiste, how he drew that great knife *slowly* out of his wounded arm; and how all the time he smiled upon War-Eagle, as if to show him that he despised the pain?"

"He is a brave youth," said the guide. "I know the stock he comes from: if he were a coward, the grisly bear might breed sheep!"

"Pray tell me something of his parents, and of his story. Is he related to War-Eagle?"

"He is," said the guide. "They are the children of two brothers. War-Eagle of the eldest; Wingenund of the youngest."

"Are these two brothers alive, Baptiste?"

"No: both were murdered by the white men, in time of peace, without provocation. There was a third brother, who, happening to be absent from the village on a hunt, escaped. He has now gone to the far-west, beyond the great river. Both the War-Eagle and the boy are called his sons; and the latter, as he told us to-day, lives in his lodge."

"Then all these three brothers were the children of Wingenund?"

"Yes."

"And who was he?"

"One of the old* Lenape:—first in council and foremost in the fight! I remember him well when I was a boy," said the guide, warming with his subject. "He taught me to follow a trail, and to travel in the woods, with no other guide than the wind, the stars, and the bark of the trees; and before I was as old as that boy, his grandson, he lent me his rifle to shoot the first Dacotah as ever I killed."

"What was the party, Baptiste!" said Reginald (anxious to keep the guide from the subject of the Dacotahs), "what party was it that committed the atrocious murder upon the Indians in time of peace?"

"Why, Master Reginald, though you were but a youngster, don't you remember hearing that twelve or fourteen years ago, a party of white men, led by Williamson, Harvey, and some other rough chaps from the Kentucky side, fell upon a village of friendly Indians on the banks of Tuscarawas river, and murdered all they found, man, woman, and child! Some of these poor Redskins had been made Christians, and were called Moravians; and their village, as was destroyed, was called by some outlandish name, too long by half for me to speak or to remember.* They had given over their own nat'ral life of smoking, hunting, and fighting, and did nothing but plant, and sow, and pray! And, after all, that's the way they was served, Master Reginald."

"Horrible and disgraceful cruelty!" said the young man: and rather thinking aloud, than addressing his companion, he added, "It is no wonder that the Indians receive so unwillingly Christian precepts, when they have such examples of Christian practice. I am not surprised that War-Eagle finds it hard to forgive *such* injuries."

"And yet you are surprised, Master Reginald," said the guide, in a deep voice, almost hoarse from repressed emotion, "that *I* do not forgive the Dacotah! Did he not burn the log hut where I was born and raised? Did he not murder those who gave me birth? Did he not drive me out, a child, into the woods, to live by berries, or wild fruits, or what I could find or kill? Is not my father's scalp (not half revenged!) now hanging before a Dacotah lodge! Oh! let me come but within rifle range of the Throat-cutter,† and if he comes off with a whole skin, I *will* forgive him!"

Our hero, seeing that farther discussion would only increase an excitement which already mastered his companion's self-control, said to him kindly, "Well, Baptiste, it must be owned that you have received from these people deep, irreparable wrong! You are a man, and would not pay them in their own base coin, by killing one of their squaws or children: but if it is ever your fortune to meet them in a fair stand-up fight, when I am with you, then you shall see that I can stand by a friend, and share in his just feelings of resentment."

"I know it—I know it, Master Reginald," said the guide, grasping the hand extended to him; and having now recovered an equanimity which nothing but the Dacotah subject ever disturbed, he added,

"If you and I were to take a summer-hunt towards the mountains, with that light-limbed War-Eagle, who has the eyes, and ears, and spring of a painter,† we might p'raps bring in a handsome load o' skins, and may be, pay off the Throat-cutters an old debt or two."

"It is more likely than you imagine, Baptiste, that we shall make an excursion to the West, this spring; for my father told me the other day—but see, there he is, with Lucy on his arm, and Aunt Mary, and Wolf by her side!"

As he said this, the young man bounded forward, and in a moment was in the midst of them, kissing his sister, shaking his father and Aunt Mary affectionately by the hand, and patting Wolf's great shaggy head.

"Dear Reginald! what has kept you so long?" said Lucy, reproachfully; where can you have been? Why, your clothes are all soiled; and see, papa," she added turning deadly pale; "there is blood upon his hunting-shirt and upon his cheek!"

"What a little coward art thou," said Reginald, "to be the daughter of a soldier! Why, Lucy, the few drops of blood upon my clothes must surely have come from your cheeks, which are as pale as a magnolia flower! Harkee Lucy, I must do something to drive the rosy current back to its proper channel; come here, girl:"

* *The village was called Gnaden-Hütten—"tents," or "cabins of grace."*

* Every Indian tribe has its peculiar mark, or sign; among all the nations of the far-west, the Sioux, or Dacotahs, are designated by passing the hand across the throat as if cutting it.

† A Panther is so called by the western hunters.

and bending her head aside, he whispered something in her ear.

Never was the effect of magic more rapid, or more potent; for in an instant the obedient blood rushed to the fair girl's cheek, suffusing, at the same time, her neck and temples with the same glowing hue; casting upon her brother a look at once playful and appealing, she pinched his ear between her tiny fingers till he fairly begged pardon, and promised not to do so again.

As it was now evident that Reginald was not much hurt, Lucy turned her eyes towards the hunter, who approached, leading Nekimi, still snorting, prancing, and curvetting, at the full length of his laryette. "Baptiste," said the Colonel, "where have you found that wild, untamed animal?"

"He belongs," said the hunter, "to Master Reginald."

The Colonel looked to his son for an explanation, who giving an arm to his sister, while the Colonel escorted Aunt Mary, turned homeward, and narrated, as they went, the events described in this and the foregoing chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing a Sketch of Mooshanne.—Reginald introduces his Sister to the two Delawares.

The day following that on which the events related in the preceding pages occurred, there was an assemblage more than usually numerous, gathered in and around the capacious store of David Muir, in Marietta: immediately in front of his door was a small party, who, from their bearing and appearance, might be easily recognised as leading persons in the little community. In the midst of them was a roughly-dressed country lad, whose haggard appearance indicated wretchedness or fatigue, or both; near the group stood his horse reeking with sweat, and showing that the messenger, for such he was, had not spared the spurs on the road. Many and eager were the questions put to him, and the countenances of his auditors evinced no ordinary degree of interest in his replies; several women, and a dozen or two of boys and girls, made repeated endeavours to penetrate into this important circle; and having contrived to overhear a disjointed word, here and there, such as "Indian," "scalped," "rifle," &c., they slunk away, one by one, to spread it abroad through the village, that a neighbouring settlement had been attacked by a large body of Indians, armed with rifles and tomahawks; and that every man, woman, and child, excepting this messenger, who had escaped, was scalped!

We will, however, introduce the reader into the centre of the above-mentionad group, and detail to him the substance of the news which created so much excitement.

It appears that on the preceding day, two brothers, named Hervey, were riding homeward, after attending a marriage, at a small settlement twenty miles to the northward of Marietta: they were not above half a mile in advance of several other men, also returning from the marriage; both were armed with rifles, having been shooting at a target for a wager, when on a sudden, a single Indian, uttering a loud war-whoop, sprang from a thicket by the road, and at one stroke of his war-club felled the elder brother to the earth, before the second could come up to his assistance, the same Indian aimed a sweeping blow at his head with the but-end of his rifle; the younger Hervey warded the blow also with his rifle, but it fell with such force that both barrels were broken off from the stocks; with the rapidity of lightning, the Indian struck him heavily on the head, and he fell stunned from his horse. A few minutes afterward, he recovered, and found some of his friends standing over him; his unfortunate brother lay dead and scalped at his side; his horse and the Indian had disappeared. Several young men dashed off immediately in pursuit, and tracked the hoofs successfully until the fugitive had entered the hardy and stony bed of a rivulet falling into the Muskingum; hence all farther search proved unsuccessful, and they returned dispirited to their companions.

It was long since so daring an outrage had been committed in the Territory; seldom was it that the Redskins would attack white men in open day, unless they were greatly superior in numbers; but for a single Indian to fall upon two armed whites, killing one and leaving the other for dead, almost within call of his friends, was an instance of audacity to which the oldest hunter could scarcely remember a parallel; it was evident also that the savage had been aware of a party of whites being at hand, otherwise he would certainly have shot one brother before he attacked the other; but, avoiding the discharge of his rifle, he had effected his purpose with a war-club.

Another striking circumstance was the clear evidence afforded that the killing of the elder Hervey was an act of personal revenge; because the younger brother, when knocked from his horse, had fallen helpless at the Indian's feet; and the latter, purposely to show that he had spared his life and scalp, had struck a knife through the lappet of his coat into the ground, with force enough to bury it up to the haft. Four or five of the best hunters had recommenced the pursuit; and although they once struck the trail of a man on foot evidently running from them, they were again baffled by the river, and returned to the settlement.

Such was the sum of the messenger's intelligence, which caused, as can easily be imagined, no little sensation in Marietta and the neighbouring districts.

"I know some of the worst o' them Redskin devils," said a bulky young man, whose countenance betrayed violent passions, and strong symptoms of free indulgence in David Muir's "fire-water;" "tell me what was this Ingian like? how did Dick Hervey describe him?"

"He hadn't over much time to look at him," said the messenger, "afore he was sent to sleep; but he says he was a very tall, powerful chap, streaked over the face with black."

"Was he a young un or an old un?"

"A young un, and active as a deer, or he couldn't have knocked those two Herveys off their critturs, as a man knocks off a corncob with an ash plant."

"I wish I had him here," said the young giant, shutting a hand as heavy and large as a shoulder of mutton. "I'd give him a real Kentucky hug."

None of the bystanders seemed able to form any guess as to who the perpetrator of this bold outrage might be; it was resolved, however, to take all possible measures for his discovery: a

meeting of the principal inhabitants was convened, a description of the Indian's person, and of the marks by which Hervey's horse might be recognised, was written, and several copies thereof made, and forwarded to the nearest posts and ferries; at the same time a reward of a hundred dollars was offered to any person who should discover the offender, and a hundred more for his seizure, dead or alive.

During the discussion of these and other plans at the meeting, our old acquaintance David Muir, who felt himself not to be one of the least important persons present, said, "I'm thinking, gentlemen, it would be as weel to send a messenger out to Colonel Brandon, wi' this intelligence; he kens the Indians as weel's ony man in this country-side, mayhap he'll gie us some gude counsel; and, sirs," added David, his grey eyes twinkling at his own sagacity, "be sure ye dinna forget to tak the advice o' yon lang-headed chiel, Battiste; if the Indian deevil's o' this side the Mississippi, Battiste will fin' him out, as sure as twa threes mak sax."

This was one of the longest orations which David had ever delivered in public; and both his suggestions being approved, carried *nem. con.*, and the meeting dissolved, David returned to his store with his hands thrust into his coat-tail pockets, and his countenance big with the consciousness of having rendered essential service to the Territory.

We must now return to Reginald, who, on the morning of this same day, rose with the sun; and feeling himself nothing the worse from his slight wounds, or from his diving adventure, sallied forth to see how Baptiste had provided for Nekimi's safety and comfort. All means having failed to entice him into a stable, the hunter had secured him firmly to an oak, casting down for him abundance both of food and litter. Reginald approached him, holding in his hand some bread; and having given the sharp, shrill cry (which, to Lucy's great alarm, he had practised more than once in the house), he was agreeably surprised to perceive that the horse recognised it, and seemed less averse to his caresses; having fed him, and carefully observed all the rules laid down by War-Eagle for gaining his affections, he returned to the house, and began to collect the various articles which he proposed to give to his Indian brother; among these was a good Kentucky rifle, and a handsome buck's-horn knife for the chief; he selected also a light fowling-piece, which he had used as a boy, and which he intended for Wingenund; to these he added several pounds of powder, and a due proportion of lead; he also threw into the package a few beads and a large cornelian ring, which had been long the occupant of his dressing-case.

When he had collected all these together he gave them to Baptiste, desiring him to be ready to accompany him to the rendezvous after breakfast; and having finished his preparations, he knocked at the door of Lucy's room, to inquire whether she was ready to preside at the morning meal.

"Come in, Reginald," she said; "if I am rather late it is your fault; for your adventures of yesterday have driven sleep from my pillow; and even when I did fall asleep, I dreamed of nothing but your Indian hero."

"Say you so, faithless one?" replied Reginald; "I shall tell that to—"

"Hush now, *Reginald*," said the blushing girl, putting her little hand upon his mouth; "did you not promise me yesterday that you would not do so again?"

"Perhaps I did," said her brother; "and I will keep it if you will come down stairs and give me a very good cup of coffee."

In the breakfast-room they were joined by the Colonel and Aunt Mary; and while they discuss that most comfortable of family meals, we will give the reader a slight sketch of the house in which they were assembled.

It was built of substantial brick of a dun red colour, and had originally been a regular and solid building of moderate dimensions; but the Colonel had added on one side a wing, containing a library and sitting-rooms for himself and his son, while on the opposite side he had built additional apartments for Aunt Mary, and a small conservatory for Lucy. Thus the building had gradually assumed a straggling and irregular shape, the back court being occupied by stables, barns, and extensive farm-offices. The site of the house was on a gentle elevation, sloping down to a little brook, which wound its bubbling way through a deep grove of oak, maple, and sycamore, and circling round the base of the hill, fell at the distance of half a mile into the Muskingum river. The spot still retained the name of "Mooshanne" (signifying in the Delaware language Elk Creek), probably owing to the little streamlet above mentioned having been a favourite resort of an animal which the rifles of Reginald and Baptiste had rendered somewhat scarce in the neighbourhood.

We left the family assembled at the breakfast-table, where the conversation still turned upon the adventures of the preceding day.

"Reginald," said Lucy, "I should like to go with you to-day, to see your Indian brother, and that heroic boy."

"I fear," replied her brother, "it is farther than you could easily walk; and, moreover, Wingenund will scarcely accompany his chief; he must be still too weak from his wound."

"Nay, Reginald; if the distance is the only difficulty, I can ride Snowdrop; and if Wingenund does come, I will reward him for his brave defence of my brother, by giving him some little trinket, which he may take back to his sister. You cannot refuse me now," she added, in a coaxing tone, the power of which over her brother was all but despotic.

"Of course I cannot, if you obtain Aunt Mary's and the Colonel's permission," said Reginald, smiling.

Lucy met with no farther opposition. Snowdrop was ordered to be saddled; in a few minutes the happy girl was equipped, and provided with a coral necklace for the chief, and a pretty broach, destined for her brother's preserver.

The party now assembled before the door, consisting of Reginald, Baptiste, and Lucy, mounted on her favourite grey pony: our hero slung his rifle across his shoulders; the sturdy woodsman, besides carrying his own enormous axe, walked lightly under the two rifles, and the other articles to be presented to the chief, and Wolf played around them his fantastic and unwieldy gambols.

Cheerful and smiling was the woodland scenery through which they passed; the dewdrops still glittered in the beams of the morning sun, and the air was impregnated with the vernal fragrance arising from a thousand opening buds and blossoms.

"See, Lucy," said her brother, as he walked by her side, while the tact of the sturdy hunter kept him a few paces in the rear, "see how those mischievous squirrels hop and chatter upon the boughs! They seem to know that your presence is a protection to them."

"I often wonder, Reginald, how you can shoot such playful and graceful animals; you who have taste enough to admire their beauty, and who can find sport more worthy of your rifle."

"It is childish sport, Lucy; yet they are no contemptible additions to the table; their furs are useful, and there is some skill in shooting them —that is, in shooting them properly."

"If I were a man, I would shoot nothing but lions and tigers, buffaloes or bears!" said his sister.

"A pretty Amazon, truly!" said Reginald, laughing: "yet, methinks, your thoughts are not always so warlike. Come, Lucy, now that we are alone (for our good Baptiste is out of earshot), you need not pout or blush if I ask you whether Ethelston is expected soon to return?"

"Indeed, I know not, Reginald," said his sister, blushing in spite of his prohibition. "His last letter to the Colonel mentioned something about privateers, and the rupture with France. Papa did not appear desirous of communicating much upon the subject, so I dropped it."

"True," said Reginald; "the French will not soon forget or forgive the loss of their fine frigate, the Insurgent, which was taken the other day so gallantly by the Constellation. I doubt not they will endeavour to cripple our trade in the West Indies. Edward has got a little craft that can run if she cannot fight."

"I am sure Edward will never run if it is possible to fight," said Lucy, a little piqued.

"There, again, you speak the truth: it is because his courage is so tempered by his judgment, that he is fit to be entrusted with other lives and property than his own: if it is *not* possible to fight, he will have sense and skill enough to show the Frenchman his heels.—By-the-by, Lucy, which vessel is he now commanding?"

Again there was a decided blush, and almost a pout on Lucy's full lip, as she said, "You know, brother, that the 'Adventure,' and the 'Pocahuntas,' are both in port, and the vessel he is now on board of is the—"

"Oh! I remember," said Reginald, laughing; "she was to be called the 'Lucy;' but Edward did not choose to hear that name in every common sailor's and negroe's mouth; so he altered it to the 'Pride of Ohio,' which means in his vocabulary the same thing."

"I wish," said Lucy, "there was any Mary, or Charlotte, or Catherine, or any other name under the sun, about which I could tease you! Have a little patience, Mr. Reginald; my turn will come: you shall see what mercy I will show you then!"

Thus did the brother and sister spar and jest with each other until they reached the spot appointed for the interview. As they had arrived rather before the time, they imagined that the War-Eagle had not yet come; but Baptiste, putting his finger to his mouth, blew a long shrill signal-whistle, and in a few minutes the chief appeared, accompanied by Wingenund. As they emerged from the forest, and approached, Reginald looked at his sister to see the effect produced by their appearance; for the chief was dressed in a manner calculated to display his noble figure and countenance to better advantage than on the preceding day. His long black hair was parted on his forehead, and gathered into a mass, confined by a narrow fillet made from the fur of the white weasel, and surmounted by an eagle's feather. It seemed that his vow of war and revenge was for the time cancelled; for the lines of black paint which had disfigured his visage were removed, and the commanding form and features were not marred by any grotesque or fanciful attire. His brawny neck was bare, and a portion of his bold, open chest appeared beneath the light hunting shirt, which was his only upper vesture. The ponderous war-club was still at his girdle, but the scalp had disappeared: and his light, free step upon the grass was like that of a young elk on a prairie.

The dress of Wingenund was unaltered. He was still very weak from the loss of blood, and the pain consequent upon his wound; his arm rested in a sling, made from the platted bark of elm; and the air of languor cast over his countenance by sleeplessness and suffering, gave additional effect to the delicacy of his features, and the deep dark lustre of his eyes.

"Our new brother is indeed a fine-looking creature!" said Lucy, as War-Eagle drew near. "What a haughty step and bearing he has! Wingenund looks too gentle to be an Indian!"

"He is as brave as gentle, Lucy; look at his arm!" and, as she did look at the wounded limb, she remembered that only yesterday it had saved her brother's life.

The greeting between Reginald and the two Indians was affectionate and cordial; he then presented his sister to them both in turn. The chieftain, placing his hand upon his heart, fixed upon her that penetrating look with which he had before scrutinized her brother; it was not the bold stare of vulgarity admiring beauty, but the child of nature reading after his own fashion a page in her book.

"War-Eagle," said Lucy to him, in her own gentle tone of voice, "I know all that passed yesterday, and you are now my brother!"

As she pronounced his name in English, a gleam shot from his eye, and a perceptible and sudden change came over his countenance; it seemed produced by some unexpected association; and Lucy was surprised at the deep pathos of his voice, as he replied, "The Great Spirit has made the sun to shine upon my white brother's path! His heart is brave; his arm is strong; and his sister is like a flower of the prairie!—her voice comes upon the ear like a pleasant dream!" These last words he spoke rather to himself than addressing those around him.

Lucy was not displeased with the Indian's compliment, and was about to speak to Wingenund, when Reginald said aloud, "Come, let us withdraw among those thick trees; we have many things to talk about." His proposal being assented to, the whole party were soon reassembled under a branching oak, screened from the public track by a thicket of rhododendron.

While they were effecting this manœuvre, the guide took an opportunity of interchanging a few sentences with the War-Eagle; the result of which was apparently satisfactory to the honest woodsman, for his face instantly resumed its usual frank and careless expression.

"Lucy," said her brother, "as you have thought proper to accompany me here, you must play your part as Queen of the Feast. I hope my brother will value these baubles

more from your hands than from mine." Thus instructed, Lucy opened the canvass package, which the guide had hitherto carried, and presenting the large rifle to the chief, she said to him,

"War-Eagle, your brother and your white sister give you this rifle as a mark of their friendship; and with it they give you powder and lead enough to shoot all the deer and bears in the territory."

The chief placed her hand and her brother's both upon his heart, saying, "War-Eagle thanks you. May the Great Spirit love you and guard your path!"

He then poised and examined the rifle, which was a piece of no ordinary beauty and excellence, while Baptiste whispered to him, in his own language, "It is loaded."

Lucy then turned to Wingenund, and presenting him with the lighter fowling-piece, said to him, "With this, a sister thanks Wingenund for a brother's life."

The boy cast his eyes modestly to the ground, saying, "Wingenund is too happy. War-Eagle will tell his name to the braves in council. The sister of Netis is good to him; Wingenund is ready to die!"

"Indeed," said Lucy to the guide, "I fear he is very faint and ill; ask the chief how he passed the night!"

"Wingenund is not ill," said the boy, with a smile; "he is very happy."

Meanwhile, Baptiste having conferred with the chief, replied, "Why, Miss Lucy, the wound was a very bad 'un, and he lost a power o' blood; once or twice in the night, War-Eagle thought he might not get over it; but he is better now, and though unable to bear much fatigue, he's a hardy young plant, and will take as much killing as an eel."

"Come, Baptiste," said Reginald; "I know you put something to eat and drink into that sack with the ammunition: War-Eagle must feast with us to-day."

The guide, opening his capacious wallet, drew from it a venison pasty, some bread, and a couple of bottles of Madeira. Lucy declined taking more than a crust of bread, merely tasting the wine to the health of the hunters. Wingenund was equally abstemious, and sat a little apart with his new sister; while Reginald, Baptiste, and the chief made a more substantial luncheon. The latter being asked, by Reginald, how he liked the wine, replied, carelessly, "Good." But it was evident that he drank it rather from courtesy than because it pleased his palate.

Reginald now desired the guide to speak to the War-Eagle in his own tongue, and to gather from him all the requisite particulars for his joining the Delawares in their summer-hunt beyond the Mississippi. He had long been anxious to visit some of those scenes which Baptiste had so often described; and his father having expressed a wish that he should go to St. Louis on some business connected with his investments in the fur-trade, he thought that so fair an opportunity ought not to be lost.

While the guide and the chief conversed in a low and earnest tone of voice, and Reginald listened with an idle curiosity, imagining now and then that he could catch their meaning, Lucy became much interested in her conversation with Wingenund; she was surprised at his intelligence and proficiency in English, and was touched by the melancholy expression of his countenance and of his deep lustrous eyes. As she was speaking, he suddenly and impressively placed his finger on her arm, then raised it to his own lips, as a sign to her to be silent, then creeping two or three yards from the party, he threw himself at full length on the grass with his ear to the ground. Lucy listened attentively, but could hear nothing but the gentle breeze stirring the leaves, and the regular sound of Snowdrop's teeth as he nibbled the young grass.

The three hunters were still busy with their arrangements for the summer, when Wingenund, resuming his sitting posture, uttered an almost imperceptible sound, like the hiss of a small serpent; instantly, as if by instinct, the War-Eagle grasped his rifle, and looked inquiringly on the intelligent countenance of the boy.

"Wingenund hears men and horses," was the short reply.

Baptiste strained his practised ears to the utmost, as did Reginald, without success. Even War-Eagle seemed for a moment unable to catch the sound—he then whispered to Reginald, "Wingenund speaks truth, there are men—not a few."

Several minutes elapsed before our hero and the guide could distinguish the tramp of horses and the voices of men speaking angrily.

Our hero and his party being effectually screened from view by the dense *laurel** thicket, could listen unobserved to the conversation of those who were approaching; and the following expressions, delivered in a loud and authoritative tone, at once attracted and absorbed their attention: "It is impossible that the fellow should escape, we have scouts out in every direction. There can be no doubt that the camp which we have just found in the woods is the one where he passed the night with other Redskins, for the embers are still warm. Dickenson and Brown are gone south towards Marietta; Henderson and his party are tracking the prairies to the north; it is impossible he should long escape; and young Hervey thinks he should know him anywhere!"

While the person who appeared to be the leader of the unseen party was thus speaking, War-Eagle whispered a few sentences to Wingenund, to which the intelligent youth only replied by a look; the chief then conversed apart, in a low, earnest voice, with the guide, who ended by grasping his hand, and saying, in the Delaware tongue, "Grande-Hâche will do it at the risk of his life."

The chief appeared satisfied, and rising with calm dignity, he tightened the belt at his waist, to which he hung his newly-acquired knife and ammunition; and throwing his rifle into the hollow of his left arm, he said to Reginald, "War-Eagle must leave his brother Netis; Grande-Hâche will tell him all; before two moons have passed, Netis will come to hunt the bison with his brother; and he shall smoke with the braves of the Lenapé."

"He will," replied Reginald, warmly pressing his hand, and at the same time passing the cornelian ring upon one of the fingers of the chief. "If the Great Spirit gives him life, he will come and hunt, and smoke with his Lenapé brother."

The chief, now turning to Lucy, drew from his head the eagle feather which was passed

* In the Western States, the rhododendron is generally called the laurel

hrough his hair, and which was quaintly stained, and ornamented with porcupine quills; offering it gracefully to her, he said, in a voice of musical gentleness, "War-Eagle wishes happiness to the 'pale flower of Mooshanne;' many braves have tried to pluck this feather from his head; no Dacotah nor Pawnee has touched it and lived! The sister of Netis may fasten it in her hair—let none but a brave warrior raise his eyes to it there."

"Thank you, dear War-Eagle," said Lucy, kindly, "I promise you it shall never be touched by an unworthy hand; and do you take this string of red beads," giving him at the same time a coral necklace, "and wear it for the sake of your white sister."

The chief received this gift with evident pleasure; and waving his hand in adieu, whispering at the same time one parting word to Wingenund, he strode leisurely away, and was soon lost in the deep glades of the forest.

CHAPTER IX.

How Reginald Brandon returned to Mooshanne with his Sister, accompanied by Wingenund; and what befell them on the Road.

Lucy Brandon was not a little surprised at the chief's sudden departure, and with the frankness natural to her character, inquired of her brother whether he could explain its cause; Reginald appeared either unable or unwilling to do so; and an appeal to the guide produced only the following unsatisfactory reply:

"War-Eagle is like the bird after which he's called—it ain't easy to explain or to follow his flight."

Wingenund remained silent, but every now and then he fixed his bright and speaking eyes upon Lucy, as if he would divine her thoughts. That young lady, though at a loss to account for her embarrassment, entertained a fear that all was not right, and proposed to her brother to return to Mooshanne.

Snowdrop was soon caught, and the little party moved leisurely homeward, Reginald and the guide leading the way, and Wingenund walking by the side of Lucy's pony; after riding a few minutes, she recovered her spirits, and remembering that there was no foundation for any surmises of evil, she resumed the conversation with her young companion, which the chief's departure had interrupted. "Tell me, Wingenund, who is the 'Black Father,' of whom you speak?"

"He is very good," said the boy, seriously; 'he talks with the Great Spirit; and he tells us all that the Great Spirit has done; how He made the earth, and the water; and how He punishes bad men, and makes good men happy."

"He is a white man, then?" said Lucy.

"He is," replied the lad; "but though he is a white man, he always speaks truth, and does good, and drinks no fire-water, and is never angry."

What a humiliating reflection is it, thought Lucy to herself, that in the mind of this young savage, the idea of white men is naturally associated with drunkenness and strife! "Tell me, Wingenund," she continued, "is the 'Black Father' old?"

"Many winters have passed over his head, and their snow rests upon his hair."

"Does he live with you always?"

"He comes and he goes, like the sunshine and the rain; he is always welcome; and the Lenape love him."

"Can he speak your tongue well?"

"He speaks many tongues, and tries to make peace between the tribes, but he loves the Lenapé, and he teaches 'the Prairie-bird' to talk with the Great Spirit."

"Does your sister speak to the Black Father in her own tongue?"

"Sometimes, and sometimes in the English; but often in a strange tongue, written on a great book. The Black Father reads it, and the Prairie-bird opens her ears, and looks on his face, and loves his words; and then she tells them all to me. But Wingenund is a child of the Lenapé—he cannot understand these things!"

"You will understand them," said Lucy, kindly, "if you only have patience; you know," she added, smiling, "your sister understands them, and she is a Lenapé too!"

"Yes," said the boy; "but nobody is like Prairie-bird."

"She must, indeed, be a remarkable person," said Lucy, humouring her young companion's fancy; "still, as you have the same father and mother, and the same blood, whatever she learns, you can learn too."

"I have no father or mother," said Wingenund, sadly, and he added, in a mysterious whisper, drawing near to Lucy, "Prairie-bird never had a father or mother."

"Never had a father or mother!" repeated Lucy, as the painful thought occurred to her, that poor Wingenund was deranged.

"Never," said the boy, in the same tone; "she came from *there*," pointing, as he spoke, towards the northwest quarter of the heaven.

"How melancholy is it," said Lucy to herself, "to think that this brave, amiable boy is so afflicted! that so intelligent and quick a mind is like a lyre with a broken string! Still," thought she, "I will endeavour to understand his meaning, and to undeceive him."

"Dear Wingenund, you are mistaken—your sister had the same father and mother as yourself; she may have learned much, and may understand things strange to you, but you might learn them too."

"Wingenund's father and mother are dead," said the boy, in a voice of deep and suppressed emotion; "he will not tell you *how* they died, for it makes his heart throb and his eyes burn; but you are good to him, and shall not see his anger. Prairie-bird never had a father; the Great Spirit gave her to the Lenapé."

While Lucy was musing how she should endeavour to dispel this strange delusion which seemed to have taken such firm hold of her young companion's mind, Reginald and Baptiste halted, and the latter said, "You see that party approaching; they may put some troublesome questions, leave me to answer them. Wingenund, you know what I mean?"

"Wingenund does not understand English," said the boy, a slight smile of irony lurking in the corner of his mouth.

The approaching party consisted of eight or ten men, all armed with rifles, excepting two, who were mounted, and who carried cutlasses and large horse-pistols; among the pedestrians towered the gigantic form of young Mike Smith, who has already been presented to the reader before the store of David Muir, in Marietta; and among the horsemen was the younger Hervey, leading his friends to scour the whole coun-

try in search of the slayer of his brother; they were all in a high state of excitement; and despite the cool and unmoved demeanour of the guide, he was not without apprehension that they might desire to wreak their vengeance on Wingenund.

"Ha! Baptiste," said Hervey, grasping the guide's hand; "you are the very man we are in search of; we have already been to the colonel's, and he told us we should find you with his son, and with Mis Brandon, in this quarter. We want your assistance, man, and that speedily, too."

"How can I serve you?" said the guide; "what is the matter? you seem bent on a hunt."

"A hunt?" exclaimed Hervey, "yes, a hunt of a Redskin devil! Harkee, Baptiste!" and stooping from his horse, he repeated to the guide in a low voice, but clear enough to be heard by all present, the circumstances attending his brother's death.

"A daring act, indeed," said the guide, musing; "but could not you follow the trail while it was fresh yesterday?"

"We followed it to a creek leading to the Muskingum, and there we lost it."

"Can you describe the appearance of the Indian?" inquired the guide.

"A tall, handsome fellow, as straight as a poplar, and with a leap like a painter, so he seemed; but d—n him, he gave me such a knock on the head, that my eyes swam for five minutes."

A cold shudder ran through Lucy's limbs as, comparing this slight sketch of War-Eagle with his sudden departure and the guide's caution to Wingenund, she recognised in the chief the object of their search: glancing her eye timidly at Wingenund, she could read on his countenance no trace of uneasiness; he was playing with Snowdrop's mane; his gun resting on the ground, and he himself apparently unconscious of what was passing.

After a minute's reflection, the guide continued: "You say that the Indian's rifle was broken in half; did you notice anything about it?"

"Nothing: it was a strong coarse piece; we have brought the stock with us; here it is," he added, calling up one of his party to whom it had been entrusted.

The guide took it in his hand, and at the first glance detected the imitation of a feather, roughly but distinctly cut with a knife; his own suspicions were at once confirmed, although his countenance betrayed no change of expression; but Mike Smith, who had been looking over his shoulder, had also observed the marks of the feather, and noticed it immediately aloud, adding, "Come, Baptiste, you know all the Ingian marks between Alleghany and the Missouri; what Redskin has this belonged to?"

"Mike," said the guide coolly, "a man's tongue must shoot far and true to hit such a mark as that."

"And yet, Baptiste, if I'd been as long at the guiding and trapping as you, I think I'd a' know'd something about it."

"Ay, that's the way of it," replied Baptiste; "you young 'uns always think you can shave a hog with a horn spoon! I'spose, Master Mike, you can tell a buzzard from a mocking-bird; but if I was to show you a feather, and ask you *what* buzzard it belonged to, the answer might not be easy to find."

"You're an old fool," growled Mike angrily; and he added as his eye rested suddenly on Wingenund, "what cut is that standing by Miss's white pony? we'll see if he knows this mark. Come here, you devil's brat."

Not a muscle in the boy's face betrayed his consciousness that he was addressed.

"Come here, you young Redskin!" shouted Mike yet more angrily, "or I'll sharpen your movements with the point of my knife."

Reginald's fiery temper was ill calculated to brook the young backwoods-man's coarse and violent language; placing himself directly between him and Wingenund, he said to the former in a stern and determined tone, "Master Smith, you forget yourself; that boy is one of my company, and is not to be exposed either to insult or injury."

"Here's a pretty coil about a young Redskin," said Mike, trying to conceal his anger under a forced laugh; "how do we know that he ain't a brother or a son of the Ingian we're in search of; s' blood, if we could find out that he was, we'd tar him, and burn him over a slow fire!"

"I tell you again," said Reginald, "that he is guilty of no crime; that he saved my life yesterday at the risk of his own, and that while I live neither you nor any of your party shall touch a hair of his head."

Baptiste fearing the result of more angry words, and moved by an appealing look from Miss Brandon, now interposed, and laying his hand on Smith's shoulder, said, "Come, Master Mike, there is no use in threatening the young Redskin when you see that he does not understand a word that you say; tell me what you wish to inquire of him, and I will ask him in his own tongue."

"His tongue be d—d," said Mike; "I'll wager a hat against a gallon of David Muir's best, that the brat knows English as well as you or I, although he seems to have nothing to do but to count the tassels on the edge of his shirt. I'll show you without hurting him," he added in a lower tone, "that I'm not far wrong."

"You swear not to injure him?" said Reginald, who overheard what passed.

"I do," said Mike; "I only want to show you that he can't make a fool of Mike Smith." Here he called up one of the men from the rear; and having whispered something in his ear, he said in a loud and distinct tone of voice, "Jack, we have found out that this Indian cub belongs to the party, one of whom murdered poor Hervey. Life for life is the law of the backwoods; do you step a little on one side; I will count four, and when I come to the four, split me the young rascal's head, either with a bullet or with your axe."

"For Heaven's sake, as you are men," exclaimed Lucy in an agony, "spare him!"

"Peace, Miss Brandon," said Mike; "your brother will explain to you that it must be so."

The guide would fain have whispered a word to the boy, but he was too closely watched by Smith, and he was obliged to trust to Wingenund's nerves and intelligence.

"Are you ready, Jack?" said Mike audibly.

"Yes!" and he counted slowly, pausing between each number: one—two—*three!* At the pronunciation of this last word Wingenund, whose countenance had not betrayed by the movement of a muscle, or by the expression of a single feature, the slightest interest in what was passing, amused himself by patting the great rough head which Wolf rubbed against his

cand, as if totally unconscious that the deadly weapon was raised, and that the next word from the hunter's lips was to be his death warrant.

"D—n it, you are right after all, Baptiste," said Mike Smith; "the brat certainly does not understand us, or he'd have pricked his ears when I came to number three; so, do you ask him in his own lingo if he knows that mark on the rifle-butt, and can tell us to what Redskin tribe it belongs?"

The guide now addressed a few words to Wingenund in the Delaware tongue, while Reginald and Lucy interchanged a glance of wonder and admiration at the boy's sagacity and courage.

"He tells me that he has seen this mark before," said the guide.

"Has he?" replied Mike; "ask him whether it is that of a Shawnee, or a Wyandot; of an Iroquois or of a Delaware?"

After again conferring with Wingenund, the guide muttered to himself, "This youngster won't tell a lie to keep a bullet from his brain or a halter from his neck; I must act for him." He added in a louder tone, "Mike, a word with you: it is not unlikely that the Ingian you're in search of is the same who gave the boy that wound, and who tried to kill Master Reginald yesterday; if it is so, he wants no more punishing; he has his allowance already."

"How so?" said Mike.

"He is dead, man—killed on the spot. Do you and Hervey meet me here to-morrow an hour before noon; I will take you to the place where the body is buried, and you shall judge for yourselves whether it is that of the man you seek."

"It's a bargain," said Mike, "we'll come to the time; now, lads, forward to Hervey's Clearing. Let's have a merry supper to-night; and to-morrow, if the guide shows us the carcase of this rascal, why we can't hurt that much; but we'll pay off a long score one day or other with some of the Redskins. Sorry to have kept you waitin', Miss, and hope we haven't scared you," said the rough fellow, making, as he drew off his party, an awkward attempt at a parting bow to Lucy.

"That was a clever turn of Baptiste's," said Reginald in a low voice to his sister; "he has made them believe that the cowardly knave who tried to stab me was the perpetrator of the daring outrage which they seek to avenge!"

"And was it really War-Eagle?" said Lucy, with a slight shudder. "He who seems so noble and so gentle—was it he who did it?"

"I believe so," said Reginald.

'But is it not wrong in us to be friends with him, and to aid his escape?"

"Indeed," replied her brother, "it admits of doubt; let us ask the guide, he will speak now without reserve." And accordingly Reginald repeated to Baptiste the question and his sister's scruples.

"Why you see, Miss," said the wary hunter, "there is no proof that War-Eagle did it, though I confess it was too bold a deed to have been done by that dog of a Wyandot; but I will tell you, Miss," he added, with increasing energy and vehemence, "IF the War-Eagle did it, you will yourself, when you know all, confess that *he did it nobly*, and that he deserves no punishment *from man. That elder Hervey* was one of *the blood-thirsty band by whom* the harmless Christian Indians* were murdered; and it is believed that it was by his own hand that Wingenund's father fell; *if* War-Eagle revenged this cruel murder, and yet spared the life of the younger brother when lying helpless at his feet, who shall dare to blame him, or move a foot in his pursuit?"

"He speaks the truth, Lucy," said her brother; "according to the rules by which retaliation is practiced by mankind, War-Eagle would have been justified in punishing with death such an act of unprovoked atrocity; but it is a dangerous subject to discuss: you had better forget *all* you have heard about it; and in case of farther inquiries being made in your presence, imitate the happy unconsciousness lately displayed by Wingenund."

"Come here, my dear young brother," he added in a kindly tone, "and tell us—did you really think that hot-headed chap was going to shoot you when he counted number three?"

"No!" said the boy, with a scornful smile.

"And why not? for he's a violent and angry man."

"He dared not," was the reply.

"How so?"

"He is a fool!" said the boy, in the same scornful tone; "a fool scarcely fit to frighten the fawn of an antelope! If he had touched me, or attempted to shoot me, Netis and Grande-Hâche would have killed him immediately."

"You are right, my young brave," said Reginald, "he dared not hurt you. See, dear Lucy," he added apart to his sister, "what a ripe judgment, what a heroic spirit, what nerves of iron, are found in the slender frame of this wounded boy, exhausted by fatigue and suffering!"

"We will at least give him a hearty supper," said Lucy, "and an affectionate welcome to our home."

Wingenund thanked her with his dark eyes, and the little party proceeded leisurely, without incident or interruption, to Mooshanne.

CHAPTER X.

In which the Reader is unceremoniously transported to another Element in Company with Ethelston; the latter is left in a disagreeable Predicament.

It is time that we should now turn our attention to Ethelston, who is much too important a personage in our narrative to be so long neglected, and respecting whose safety Lucy began to feel the jealous anxiety of love; for "The Pride of Ohio" had been long expected in Marietta, and several French frigates and corvettes were reported to be cruising among the West India Islands, actively engaged in revenging upon American commerce the loss which they had sustained in the Insurgente. We shall soon see that Lucy's alarm was not altogether groundless, and that her lover's prolonged absence was not without sufficient cause. About a month preceding the occurrences detailed in the last chapter, Ethelston, having landed his merchandise in safety at Port Royal, and having taken on board a small cargo of sugar and coffee, prepared to return to New Orleans; he had heard of the French men-of-war cruising in the neighbourhood, and prudently resolved to risk as little

* Alluding again to the massacre of the Moravian Delawares at "Gnadenhutten."

as possible on this trip; he took, therefore, securities for a great portion of the amount due to him, which he left in the charge of the vessel's consignees, and conveyed on board only a sufficient cargo to put The Bride of Ohio in perfect sailing trim, and to give her a fair chance of escape in case she were chased by an enemy; his little brig was well rigged and manned, and he felt confident that few, if any, of the French cruisers would match her for speed. His mate or sailing-master was Gregson, a hardy, weather-beaten old sailor, who had served on board every kind of craft, from a man-of-war to a fishing-cobble, and knew every headland, reef, and current in that dangerous sea, as well as a Liverpool pilot knows the banks and shoals in the mouth of the Mersey. The Pride of Ohio mounted three guns: two eighteen pound carronades, and one long nine pounder; ten stout fellows and a black cook formed her complement; the last-mentioned person deserves special notice, as he was a character strangely formed by the alternations of fortune which he had seen. A native of the interior of western Africa, he had, in early life, been chosen, on account of his extraordinary strength and courage, a chief of the Lucumi tribe, to which he belonged; but having been unfortunately made a prisoner, he was taken down to the coast and sold to a slaver; thence he had been conveyed to some of the Spanish islands, and afterwards to Virginia, where he had come into the possession of Colonel Brandon, who, finding him possessed of many good qualities, and of a sagacity very rare among his countrymen, had offered him his liberty when he moved to Ohio; but Cupid (for so was the negro called) had grown so much attached to his master, that he begged to be allowed to remain in his service, and from one employment to another, had now become cook and steward on board The Pride of Ohio. In frame he was Herculean; and though he rarely exerted his strength, he had shown on various occasions that it was nearly, if not quite, equal to that of any other two men in the vessel. He spoke but little, and was sullen and reserved in his manners; but as he never disobeyed orders, and never was guilty of aggression or violence, Cupid was, upon the whole, a favourite with the crew.

To Ethelston he was invaluable; for he was always at his post, was scrupulously honest with respect to money or stores placed under his charge, and on more than one occasion his shrewdness and readiness had surprised his young commander. The captain (for so was Ethelston called on board) always treated Cupid kindly, and never allowed him to be made the subject of those jeers and insults to which free negroes in the States are usually exposed; on this account the cook, who never forgot that he *had* been a warrior, entertained towards him the warmest feelings of attachment and gratitude.

How or where he had obtained the name he bore, none seemed to know; and Ethelston remembered having heard that when first he came into Colonel Brandon's possession, and was asked his name, he had sullenly replied, "The name I once had is at home: a slave has neither name nor home!" A terrible gash across his forehead and left cheek (received, probably, in the war when he was captured) h
a countenance that had been originally expressive of haughtiness and determination, and had, perhaps, led the slave-dealer to bestow upon him in irony the name by which he was now called.

The Pride of Ohio had made good two days of her homeward passage, when, in endeavouring to round a point on the southern coast of Cuba, Ethelston descried a ship some miles to windward, and ahead, which a careful examination through his glass convinced him was a French frigate. His mate being below at the time, he sent for him on deck, anxious to see whether the experienced sailor's observation would confirm his opinion. As soon as he appeared, handing him the glass, he said, "Gregson, see what you make of that fellow on our larboard bow."

"Make of her!" said the mate; "the devil take him that made her, and him that brought her athwart us, say I, captain! She's a Frenchman; and though we can't well see her hull yet, I doubt it won't be long before we see her row of teeth."

"I thought so myself," said Ethelston. "We must hold our course steady; and if we can round the point, we may then bear away, and show her a pair of heels. Turn the hands up, Gregson; trim the sails, and stand by for a run. Put Harrison at the helm; he can keep her a point nearer than that youngster."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the reply; and having executed the order, he returned to Ethelston, who was still sweeping the southern horizon with his glass, and examining the strange ship, whose hull was now distinctly visible.

The young man's countenance wore a grave expression, as, returning the glass to his mate, he said, "Gregson, it is, as we supposed, a French frigate. We may, perhaps, creep along under the shore without his noticing our small craft."

The old seaman riveted the glass upon the stranger, as if he wished to count every sail and plank. During the examination, he grunted two or three inarticulate ejaculations, in unison with which his hard features underwent various contortions; and his young commander waited with no little impatience for what he called his "overhauling."

"She's neither more nor less than that infernal 'Epervier,' commanded by L'Estrange. She's one of the fastest sailers in their navy; and as for our creeping past her without being seen, he's the wrong sort o' man for that fun: herring or whale, all's fish for his net!"

"I have often heard of him," said Ethelston "they say he's a fine fellow."

"That he is, to give the devil his due, as jolly an old dog as ever lived, and much too good a seaman for a Mounseer. Look'ee there, captain," added he, after another squint through the glass; "he's altering his course already—two or three points free, and the reefs shaken out o' the tops'ls. We shall hear from him soon."

"Can we give him the slip by bearing up for the eastern passage?—We should then show him our tail; and a stern chase is a long one."

"We might try if you wish it, captain; but it blows fresh, and she won't be very fond of this lee shore. I think, if you allow me to ad-

[illegible] we'd better hug it; take the chance of a long shot in rounding that headland, and then run for the inner channel behind the Isle of Pines. He'll not be after following us there; or, if he does, the frigate's keel will chance to scrape acquaintance with a reef."

"You are right, Gregson," said Ethelston. "The pride may fetch that point on this tack. Keep a close luff, Harrison."

"I luff it is, sir," was the reply, as Ethelston went below to consult his chart, and to prepare himself for entering the intricate channel between the Isla de Pinos and the main island.

The gallant little brig well sustained her high character as a sailer, and dashed her bows fearlessly through the foaming waves, under a press of canvass such as few vessels of her tonnage could have borne. The breeze was freshening, and the frigate now shaped her course with the evident intention of cutting off the chase from rounding the headland before mentioned.

The men on board the brig were now clustered forward, anxiously debating the probable issue; while Cucip steamed away in his caboose, preparing the dinner as quietly as if there had been no frigate to windward, nor a rock-bound shore to leeward; but though he seemed thus busied in his usual avocations, he cast every now and then his dark eye upon the Epervier; and few on board could estimate better than himself the danger of their situation.

Ethelston having finished a careful examination of his chart, now came on deck, and a single glance sufficed to shew him that he could not round the point a-head without coming within range of the frigate's guns: but the brig had kept her offing, and he had little doubt of her making good her escape, unless she were crippled by a shot from the enemy.

The Epervier now hoisted her colours for the brig to heave-to; and that being disregarded, she fired a shot which fell short of her bows. Finding that no notice was taken of this, L'Estrange ordered his first lieutenant to fire at the saucy brig in good earnest, to bring her to her senses. Fortunately for the latter, there was a short, angry sea running, and the distance being considerable, the first shot did not take effect. Several of the hands on board the brig had served in men-of-war; these were now oracles among their messmates, and they looked with some anxiety at their young captain, curious to see how he would behave under fire, for they believed he had never smelt powder and although strict and firm in his command, he was usually so gentle and quiet in his manner, that they considered him rather a studious than a fighting character. Their curiosity was not, however, much gratified; for Ethelston, without appearing to notice the frigate, kept his eye steadily fixed on the cape ahead; and after a brief silence, he said, "Gregson there's a strong current which sets in shore here, 'the Pride' cannot weather that point on this tack."

"You are right, sir," said the mate; L'Estrange has got his bristles up, he is nearing us every minute, and if we carry on this course, in another half hour, both will go ashore."

"Ha!" exclaimed the young captain, the colour rising in his cheek, as a sudden thought flashed across him. "If we could ensure that *both would go to pieces among* those breakers, it would be a glorious death for the little brig to die!"

He spoke these words in an under tone, and rather musing to himself than addressing his officer. The latter, however, overheard them, and looked at him with an astonishment which he could not repress; for he also knew as little as the crew, of the determined courage that reposed under the calm and quiet demeanour of his young commander. Again a wreath of smoke issued from the bows of the frigate, and a round shot passed through the rigging of the chase, doing fortunately no material damage, but proving that they were now within easy range.

"I fear it will not do, sir," said the mate in reply to Ethelston's last words; "she can peer away at us, and yet make her offing good."

"Then there remains but one chance for us," said the captain; "answer her signal, show your colours, 'bout ship, and stand for the frigate."

The mate was, if possible, more surprised at this order than he had been before at the proposal to try and cast both vessels ashore; but he was too good a seaman to hesitate or to ask any questions; and in a few minutes the gallant little brig had answered the signal, and was standing out towards the frigate on the starboard tack.

We will now transport the reader for a few minutes on board Epervier, and make him acquainted with the captain, into whose clutches the poor little brig seemed destined to fall.

L'Estrange was a fine-looking, middle-aged man, who had spent the greater part of his life at sea, and had married, when very young, a Spanish creole, whose beauty was her only dower; he had several children by this marriage the eldest of whom was now a lieutenant on board his ship; the remainder of the family resided at Point à Pitre, in Guadaloupe, for the captain was in truth rather of the 'ancien regime;' he loved his country, but he hated the Directory and other fruits of the French Revolution; so that he never went to Europe, and would have been but rarely employed had he not been known to be one of the most skilful and experienced officers in the French navy. Such was the man who now stood on the frigate's quarter-deck, and after examining "The Pride" again through his glass, turned to his first-lieutenant and desired him to cease firing. "That obstinate trader," he added, "seemed very anxious to escape, and thought but little of the risk she ran of going ashore, or of being riddled by our shot!"

"She's one of those saucy Americans," said the lieutenant, "that think nothing afloat can match 'em; however she's made a mistake this time, and I hope, sir, when she's overhauled, she'll prove worth the trouble she's given!"

The frigate, by this time, finding herself too close in on a lee shore, hauled to the wind, and disliking the broken and rugged appearance of the coast, determined not to lie-to for the brig until she had made sufficient offing. This was precisely the calculation that Ethelston had made; and he now paced his deck with a calm and satisfied countenance, while his men, grouped on the forecastle, were quite at a loss to discover his intentions; the mate, however

was clearer sighted, and could not withhold his admiration from the decision and boldness of a manœuvre, the success of which must soon be tested.

The captain of the frigate went below to dinner, having given orders to the lieutenant to stand out on the same tack for another half hour, then to lie-to until the brig should come alongside.

Meantime, Ethelston, who had kept his eye fixed upon the head-land so often mentioned, muttering to himself, "she will fetch it now," desired the man at the helm, to yaw the brig about, to throw her up now and then in the wind, so as to fall astern of the frigate as much as possible, yet not apparently varying the course. Having done so as long as he judged it practicable without awakening the enemy's suspicion, he saw, to his inexpressible delight, the frigate shorten sail to enable him to come up; instantly seizing this advantage, he ordered his mate to put the brig about, and run for the Isle of Pines. It may well be imagined that this bold manœuvre was not many moments unperceived on board the frigate; and L'Estrange's astonishment was great, when from the noise overhead, and from the heeling of the ship, he found that her course was altered. Springing on deck, he saw that he had been outwitted by the saucy brig, which was crowding all sail, and seemed not unlikely to effect her escape. The old captain chafed, and stormed, and swore that the obstinate little trader should pay dearly for her insolence.

The Epervier was a fast sailer, and as she now dashed the spray from her bows under a press of canvass, it was soon evident that the brig could not yet round the point without coming within range of her guns.

Ethelston's mind was now made up; and finding his men cheerful and inspirited by the success of his manœuvre, he yet hoped to bring his vessel into the intricate channel behind the island, where the frigate would not venture to follow; it was not long before she again saluted him, and one of the shot passing through the brig's bulwarks close to him, shivered the binnacle into a hundred pieces. Observing symptoms of uneasiness in the man at the helm, and that he swerved from the course, Ethelston gave him a stern reproof, and again desired Harrison to come to the helm. The frigate, which still held the weather-gage, seemed now resolved to cut off the brig from the headland, and to sink her if she attempted to weather it. Ethelston saw his full danger, and was prepared to meet it; had he commanded a vessel of war, however small, he would not have shrunk from the responsibility he was about to incur; but, remembering that his little brig was but a trader, and that the crew ought not to be exposed without their own consent to danger so imminent as that before them, he desired Gregson to call them aft, when he addressed them as follows:

"My lads,—you see the scrape we are in; if we can round that point we may yet escape but to do so, we must run within a few hundred yards of the frigate's broadside. What say you, my lads, shall we strike, or stand the chance?—a French prison, or hurrah for the Balise?"

"Hurrah for the Balise," shouted the men, animated by their young commander's words and by his fearless bearing; so the little brig held on her way.

A few minutes proved that he had neither magnified nor underrated the danger; his chart gave him deep water round the headland; and he now ordered Harrison to keep her away, and let her run close in shore, thereby increasing her speed, and the distance from the enemy.

The surprise and wrath of L'Estrange, at the impudent daring of a craft which he now perceived to be really nothing but an insignificant trader, are not to be described. He bore up after her, and having desired the men to stand to their guns, generously determined to give the saucy chase one more chance, but finding his repeated signal for her to heave-to, disregarded, he reluctantly gave the order to fire. Fortunately for "The Pride," the sea was running high, and naval gunnery had not then reached the perfection which it has since attained; and though her rigging was cut up from stem to stern, and her fore-topmast was shot away, and though she received several shot in her hull, she still answered her helm, and gallantly rounding the point, ran in shore, and was in a few minutes among shoals which, to her light draught, were not dangerous, but where it would have been madness in the frigate to follow.

CHAPTER XI.

Ethelston's further Adventures at sea, and how he became Captor and Captive in a very short space of time

It seemed almost miraculous that not a man on the "Pride of the Ohio" was killed by the frigate's broadside, nor was one wounded, excepting Ethelston, who received a slight hurt in the left arm from a splinter; but he paid no attention to it, and calmly gave all the requisite orders for repairing the damaged spars and rigging.

As soon as all was made snug, he let the men go below to dinner, and leaning over the shivered bulwarks of his little craft, seemed busily employed in counting the shot that had struck her, but his eyes were for a time fixed upon the water, through which she was cutting her easy way, and his thoughts were afar off, as he whispered almost audibly to himself, "Dear, dear Lucy—your namesake is wounded and disfigured, but she is not disgraced. Thank Heaven, no Frenchman's foot has yet trodden her deck, and—"

Here he was interrupted by Gregson, who having been carefully observing the frigate through his glass, came up to him, and said, "Beg pardon, sir, but she is getting ready her boats, and the breeze is failing fast; in another hour we shall have scarce a cat's paw.

Ethelston started from his short reverie, and immediately convinced himself that the mate spoke the truth: "You are right," said he, "but we have a good hour to spare, for the frigate is nearly becalmed. Let the men have their dinner quietly, say nothing to them about the matter, and give 'em an extra glass of grog; but no drunkenness, Gregson; they may want the full use of their heads and hands to-night; send Cupid to my cabin, and tell him to bring me a slice of cold meat and a glass of Madeira."

So saying, he went below; the mate looked after him, and turning his quid three or four times in his cheek, he muttered, "Damme if he makes any more count of the frigate's guns or boats than a bear does of a bee-hive! They spoilt as good a commodore as ever stepped a deck when they made a trading-skipper of him." Having vented this characteristic encomium on his young commander, the old seaman went forward to execute his orders.

Meanwhile Ethelston, consulting his chart, found that the reefs and shoals as laid down, rendered the navigation of the coast extremely dangerous even for the light draught of his brig; having only allowed himself a few minutes for refreshment, he again went on deck, and observing the frigate still becalmed, he ordered the mate to shorten sail, take soundings, and to desire the carpenter to make a report of the leakage, or any other serious injury sustained by the frigate's shot.

During this time L'Estrange was not idle on board the "Epervier." Nettled at the successful trick played upon him, he resolved as the breeze gradually died away to capture the chase with his boats; for this duty the launch and the pinnace were assigned: the former had a carronade and twenty-five hands, and was commanded by his son; the latter had a swivel, and thirteen hands, commanded by a junior lieutenant. The object of L'Estrange being to prevent an unnecessary effusion of blood, by sending a force strong enough to render resistance hopeless on the part of, what he called, a dirty little sugar-boat. The crew of The Pride of Ohio, elated by the success of their Captain's manœuvre, and exhilarated by the extra grog served out, were in high good humour, and laughing over the events of the morning with reckless merriment, when they received an order from Ethelston to come aft. On their obeying the summons, he again addressed them as follows:

"My lads, you have thus far done your duty like men; but our work is not yet over. The Epervier is determined to sink or capture our little craft; she is now getting out her boats for that service; if we resist, we shall have warm work of it; if we strike without a fight, we may rot in a French dungeon. Again I ask you, my lads, will you stick by The Pride, and hurrah for home, or a sailor's grave!"

A hearty and simultaneous cheer from the crew was the only reply.

"I knew it, my lads," continued Ethelston, his countenance, usually so calm, now glowing with enthusiasm, "I knew that you would not desert her while she could float! It is now my duty to tell you that she has received two awkward shots just between wind and water line, and that she leaks apace. We must stop them as well as we may; but be prepared for the boats of the Epervier;—they shall at least buy us a dear bargain!"

Ethelston now called the mate, and gave him full instructions for the plan of defence from the expected attack. The long gun and the carronades were got ready and loaded, the former with round shot, the latter with grape; small arms and cutlasses were served out to the men, and the deck cleared of everything that might impede them in the approaching struggle. Meantime Ethelston ordered to be hoisted a new ensign, given to the brig by Lucy, and said to be partly worked by her own fair fingers. As soon as it was run up, he sent aloft a boy, with orders to nail it to the mast-head, which was done amid the repeated cheers of the crew. They were not long kept in suspense; the breeze had died away: the flapping sails and creaking yards gave the usual sullen indications of a calm, when the boats from the Epervier advanced at a steady and measured stroke towards the brig. Ethelston gave the long gun to the charge of Gregson, reserving to himself that of the carronades; he issued also special orders not to fire, under any circumstances, until he gave the word, or in case he fell, until they received the order from Gregson, who would succeed him in the command.

During all these preparations, Cupid appeared indifferent to what was passing, and continued busily occupied with his pots and pans in the caboose. This conduct caused some little surprise in Ethelston, who knew that the black was not the stupid phlegmatic character that he now seemed; and he accordingly sent Gregson to inquire whether, in the event of an attack from the frigate's boats, he meant to fight? desiring the mate at the same time to offer him a cutlass. The African grinned when he received this message, and replied that he meant to do his best. He declined, however, the proffered cutlass, informing the mate, that he had got a toasting-fork of his own, ready for the Mounseers; as he said this, he showed him the fragment of a capstan-bar, the end of which he had sharpened and burnt hard in the hot cinders; it was an unwieldly kind of club, and in the hands of an ordinary man, could have been but of little service; but his gigantic strength enabled him to wield it like a common cudgel. The truth is, that Cupid would have preferred being armed with cutlass and pistol, both of which he could use as well as any man on board; but he had tact enough to know that the prejudice against his colour forbad his taking his place on deck among the other defenders of the vessel.

The boats being now within hail, Lieutenant L'Estrange stood up in the launch and ordered the brig to strike her colours, and receive him on board. Finding this order unheeded, he repeated it through the trumpet in a sterner tone, adding that, if not immediately obeyed, he should fire upon her. Not a man stirred on board the brig, neither was any reply made to the lieutenant, who forthwith discharged the contents of his carronade into her hull, by which one man was killed dead, and two were wounded by splinters; he then desired his men to pull hard for the brig to board her, while others had orders to fire small arms at all whom they could see above the bulwarks. The boats had approached within fifty yards before Ethelston gave the word to fire. Gregson pointed the long gun upon the smaller boat with so true an aim that the heavy shot went clean through her, and she filled and went down in a few minutes, the survivors of her crew being picked up by the launch. Meanwhile, Ethelston fired a volley of grape into the latter with terrible effect, several being killed on the spot, and many of the remainder severely wounded. Nothing daunted by this murderous fire, the gallant young lieutenant held on his way to the brig

and again discharging his carronade at the distance of only a few yards, her timbers were fearfully rent, and amidst the smoke and confusion thereby created, he and his crew scrambled up her sides to board. The combat was now hand to hand; nor was it very unequal, so many of the Frenchmen having been killed and wounded in the boats; they were strong enough, however, to make good their footing on deck, and inch by inch, they forced back the crew of the brig. Ethelston fought with the courage of a lion; his voice was heard above the din of the fray, animating his men; and several of the boldest of the enemy had already felt the edge of his cutlass. Nor was young L'Estrange less gallant in his attack, and his followers being more numerous than their opponents, drove them back gradually by main force. It was at this moment, that Cupid, who had hitherto remained unnoticed in his caboose, thought fit to commence his operations; which he did by throwing a great pan of greasy boiling water over three or four of the assailants, and then laying about him with his huge club, which felled a man almost at every blow. The excruciating pain occasioned by the hot liquid, together with the consternation produced by this unexpected attack in their rear, completed the dismay of the Frenchmen. At this crisis young L'Estrange slipped and fell on the deck; Gregson, bestriding him, was about to dispatch him, when Ethelston, who was already bleeding from a severe cutlass wound in the forehead, rushed forward to save him; but the infuriated youth, perhaps mistaking his intention, drew his last remaining pistol, and fired with so true an aim, that Ethelston's left arm fell powerless at his side. A flush of anger came over his countenance; but seeing Gregson again raising his hand to dispatch the young officer, he again interposed, and desired the mate to spare him,—in order which the seaman reluctantly obeyed.

Ethelston now entreated L'Estrange to give up his sword, and to save farther bloodshed; and the young man, seeing that his followers were mostly overpowered and wounded, presented it with a countenance in which grief and shame were blended with indignation. "Stay," said Ethelston; "before I receive your sword, the conditions on which I receive it are, that you give your parole, that neither you nor any one of your men shall bear arms against the United States, during the continuance of this war, whether you and I are recaptured or not; and the launch becomes my prize."

To these terms the youth assented, and ordered such of his men as were not quite disabled, to lay down their arms. In a few minutes, all who were unhurt were busily engaged in tending the dying and wounded. Fortunately an assistant-surgeon, who had volunteered on this service from the frigate, was among those unhurt, and he set about his professional duties with as much alacrity as if he had been in the ward of a hospital. Cupid retreated quietly to his caboose, and Ethelston continued giving his orders with the same clearness and decision that had marked his whole conduct. Young L'Estrange looked over the brig's low sides into the water; his heart was too full for utterance; and his captor, with considerate kindness refrained from addressing him. The surgeon, observing that the blood still flowed from the wound on Ethelston's forehead, and that his left arm hung at his side, now came and offered his services. Thanking him courteously, he replied, smiling, "I took my chance of wounds on equal terms with those brave fellows, and I will take my chance of cure on equal terms also; when you have attended to all those who are more seriously hurt, I shall be happy to avail myself of your skill."

The surgeon bowed and withdrew. An audible groan burst from the unhappy L'Estrange, but still he spoke not; and Ethelston held a brief consultation with his mate and the carpenter, the result of which was, an order given to the former, in a low tone of voice, "to prepare immediately, and to send Cupid to him in the cabin."

As he was going down, L'Estrange came to him, and asked him, confusedly, and with an averted countenance, if he might speak to him alone for a minute. Ethelston begged him to follow him into his cabin, when, having shut the door, he said, "M. L'Estrange, we are alone, pray speak; is there anything in which I can serve you."

The youth gazed on him for a moment, in an agony that could not yet find relief in words, and then falling on the floor, burst into a flood of tears. Ethelston was moved and surprised at this violent grief in one whom he had so lately seen under the influence of pride and passion. Taking him kindly by the hand, he said, "Pray compose yourself! these are misfortunes to which all brave men are liable. You did all that a gallant officer could do;—success is at the disposal of a higher power; you will meet it another day."

"Never, never!" said the young lieutenant, vehemently; "the loss of my boat is nothing; the failure of our attack is nothing; but I am a dishonoured coward, and Heaven itself cannot restore a tainted honour!"

"Nay, nay," replied Ethelston; "you must not say so. I maintain that you and your crew fought gallantly till every hope of success was gone—the bravest can do no more!"

"You are blindly generous," said the youth, passionately; "you *will* not understand me! When every hope was gone—when I lay at the mercy of your mate's cutlass—you sprang forward to save my life.—I, like a savage—a monster—a coward as I am,—fired and tried to kill you;—even then, without a word of anger or reproach, you, although wounded by my pistol, again interposed, and saved me from the death I deserved. Oh, would that I had died an hundred deaths rather than have lived to such disgrace!"

And again the unhappy young officer buried his face in his hands, while his whole frame still trembled convulsively with grief. Ethelston used every exertion to soothe and allay his agitation. He assured him that the wound he had received was not serious, that the pistol was fired under a strong excitement, and in the turmoil of a bloody fray, when no man's thoughts are sufficiently collected to regulate his conduct; and he forgave him so freely and mingled his forgiveness with so many expressions of kindness and esteem, that he succeeded at length in restoring him to a certain degree o

composure. Nothing, however, would satisfy L'Estrange but that he should have his wounds instantly dressed; and he ran himself and summoned the surgeon, resolving to be present at the operation.

When Ethelston's clothes were removed, it appeared that besides a few flesh cuts of no great consequence, he had received two severe shot wounds: one from a musket-ball, which had sunk deep into the left shoulder, the other from L'Estrange's pistol, by which the bone of the left arm was broken. The latter was soon set and bandaged; but the ball could not be extracted from the former, either because the surgeon's skill was not equal to the task, or from his not having with him the instruments requisite for the operation. As soon as this was over, Ethelston dismissed the surgeon; and turning good-humouredly to L'Estrange, he said, "Now, my young friend, I want your assistance I must lose no time in putting all our men aboard the launch, and taking in as many stores and necessaries as she will hold, for this brig is doomed; your swivel and the frigate's guns have finished her; she is fast settling down, and in a couple of hours I expect her to sink."

"On my word, sir," said L'Estrange, "you will pardon me if I say, that you are the strangest gentleman that I ever yet knew to command a trading brig! You out-manœuvre a frigate, capture her boats, fight as if you had done nothing but fight all your life, sit as quiet under that surgeon's probes and tortures as if you were eating your dinner, and now talk calmly of scuttling your brig, for which you have run all these risks!"

"It is my philosophy, Monsieur l'Estrange. I tried first to get away without fighting; when that was impossible, I fought as well as I could. What has happened since, and what is yet to come, I bear as well as I can! All that I ask of you is to keep your fellows in order, and make them assist mine in removing the wounded and the requisite stores on board the launch." So saying, and again saluting his prisoner, he went on deck.

Though he struggled thus manfully against his emotion, it was with a heavy heart that Ethelston prepared to bid a final adieu to his little vessel, which he loved much for her own sake,—more perhaps for the name she bore. While giving the necessary orders for this melancholy duty, his attention was called by Gregson to a sail that was coming up with the light evening breeze astern. One look through the glass sufficed to shew him that she hoisted French colours; and L'Estrange, who now came on deck, immediately knew her to be the Hirondelle,—an armed cutter that acted on this cruise as a tender to the Epervier. A momentary glow overspread the countenance of Ethelston, as he felt that resistance was hopeless, and that in another hour his brig would be sunk, and his brave crew prisoners. But being too proud to allow the French officer to see his emotion, he controlled it by a powerful effort, and continued to give his orders with his accustomed coolness and precision.

Though young L'Estrange's heart beat high *at this sudden and unlooked*-for deliverance, he *could not forbear his admiration* at his captor's self-possession; and his own joy was damped by the remembrance of that portion of his own conduct which he had so deeply lamented, and also of the parole he had given not to bear arms again during the war. Meantime the removal of the men, the stores, provisions, and papers from the brig went on with the greatest order and dispatch.

Ethelston was the last to leave her; previous to his doing so, he made the carpenter knock out the oakum and other temporary plugs with which he had stopped the leaks, being determined that she should not fall into the hands of the French. This being completed, the launch shoved off; and while pulling heavily for the shore, the crew looked in gloomy silence at their ill-fated brig. Ethelston was almost unmanned; for his heart and his thoughts were on Ohio's banks, and he could not separate the recollections of Lucy from the untimely fate of her favourite vessel. He gazed until his sight and brain grew dizzy; he fancied that he saw Lucy's form on the deck of the brig, and that she stretched her arms to him for aid. Even while he thus looked, the waters poured fast into their victim. She settled,—sank; and in a few minutes scarce a bubble on their surface told where the Pride of Ohio had gone down! A groan burst from Ethelston's bosom. Nature could no longer endure the accumulated weight of fatigue and intense pain occasioned by his wounds: he sank down insensible in the boat, and when he recovered his senses, found himself a prisoner on board the Hirondelle.

Great had been the surprise of the lieutenant who commanded her at the disappearance of the brig which he had been sent to secure; and greater still at the condition of the persons found on board the launch. His inquiries were answered by young L'Estrange with obvious reluctance: so having paid the last melancholy duties to the dead, and afforded all the assistance in his power to the wounded, he put about the cutter, and made sail for the Epervier.

As soon as young L'Estrange found himself on the frigate's deck, he asked for an immediate and private audience of his father, to whom he detailed without reserve all the circumstances of the late expedition. He concluded his narration with the warmest praises of Ethelston's courage, conduct, and humanity, while he repeated that bitter censure of his own behaviour which he had before expressed on board the Pride of Ohio. The gallant old Captain, though mortified at the failure of the enterprise and the loss of men that he had sustained, could not but appreciate the candour, and feel for the mortification of his favourite son; and he readily promised that Ethelston should be treated with the greatest care and kindness, and that the most favourable terms, consistent with his duty, should be offered to the prisoners.

Young L'Estrange gave up his own berth to Ethelston, whose severe sufferings had been succeeded by a weakness and lethargy yet more dangerous. The surgeon was ordered to attend him; and his care was extended to all the wounded, without distinction of country.

After a few days Captain l'Estrange determined to exchange Gregson, the mate, and the remainder of the brig's crew, for some French prisoners lately taken by an American priva-

veer, they were accordingly placed for that purpose on board the cutter, and sent to New-Orleans. Young L'Estrange having learned from the mate the address of Colonel Brandon and his connection with Ethelston, wrote him a letter, in which he mentioned the latter in the highest and most affectionate terms, assuring the Colonel that he should be treated as if he were his own brother; and that, although the danger arising from his wounds rendered it absolutely necessary that he should return to Guadaloupe with the frigate, his friends might rely upon his being tended with the same care as if he had been at home. Cupid, at his own urgent entreaty, remained with his master, taking charge of all his private baggage and papers.

We need not follow the fate of the cutter any farther than to say that she reached her destination in safety; that the proposed exchange was effected, and the prisoners restored to their respective homes.

The surgeon on board the Epervier succeeded at length in taking out the ball lodged in Ethelston's shoulder, and when they arrived at Guadaloupe, he pronounced his patient out of danger, but enjoined the strictest quiet and confinement, till his recovery should be farther advanced. The ardent young L'Estrange no sooner reached home than he prevailed on his father to receive Ethelston into his own house. He painted to his sister Nina, a girl of seventeen, the sufferings and the heroism of their guest, in the most glowing colours; he made her prepare for him the most refreshing and restoring beverages; he watched for hours at the side of his couch; in short, he lavished upon him all those marks of affection with which a hasty and generous nature loves to make reparation for a wrong. In all these attentions and endeavours, he was warmly seconded by Nina, who made her brother repeat more than once, the narrative of the defence and subsequent loss of the brig. How Ethelston's recovery proceeded under the care of the brother and sister shall be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

Visit of Wingenund to Mooshanne. He rejoins War-Eagle, and they return to their band in the far-west. M. Perrot makes an unsuccessful attack on the heart of a young lady.

We must now return to Mooshanne, where Colonel Brandon received Wingenund very kindly; and within half an hour of the arrival of the party, they were all seated at his hospitable board, whereon smoked venison steaks, various kinds of fowls, a substantial ham, cakes of rice, and Indian maize. On the side-table were cream, wild honey, cheese, and preserved fruits, all these delicacies being admirably served under the superintendence of Aunt Mary, who was delighted with Wingenund, praised the extreme beauty of his eyes and features, telling the Colonel, in a whisper, that if she had been thirty-five years younger, she should have been afraid of losing her heart! The youth was indeed the hero of the day: all were grateful to him for his gallant preservation of Reginald's life, and all strove with equal anxiety to make him forget that he was among strangers. Nor was the task difficult; for though he had only the use of one hand, it was surprising to see the tact and self-possession with which he conducted himself, the temperate quietness with which he ate and drank, and the ease with which he handled some of the implements at table, which he probably saw for the first time. Baptiste was a privileged person in the Colonel's house, and was allowed to dine as he pleased, either with its master, or with Perrot and the other servants. On this occasion, he was present in the dining-room, and seemed to take a pleasure in drawing out the young Delaware, and in making him talk on subjects which he knew would be interesting to the rest of the party. Wingenund was quiet and reserved in his replies, except when a question was put to him by Lucy, to whom he gave his answers with the greatest naieveté, telling her more than once, that she reminded him of his sister Prairie-bird, but that the latter was taller, and had darker hair. While addressing her, he kept his large speaking eyes so riveted upon Lucy's countenance, that she cast her own to the ground, almost blushing at the boy's earnest and admiring gaze. To relieve herself from embarrassment, she again inquired about this mysterious sister, saying, "Tell me, Wingenund, has she taught you to read, as well as to speak our tongue."

"No," said the youth; "Prairie-bird talks with the Great Spirit, and with paper books, and so does the Black Father; but Wingenund cannot understand them,—he is only a poor Indian."

Here Reginald, whose curiosity was much excited, inquired, "Does the Prairie-bird look kindly on the young chiefs of the tribe?—Will she be the wife of a chief?"

There was something both of surprise and scorn in Wingenund's countenance, as he replied, "Prairie-bird is kind to all—the young chiefs find wives among the daughters of the Delawares;—but the antelope mates not with the moose, though they feed on the same prairie. The Great Spirit knows where the Prairie-bird was born; but her race is unknown to the wise men among the Tortoises."

Reginald and his sister were equally at a loss to understand his meaning; both looked inquiringly at the Guide, who was rubbing his ear, as if rather puzzled by the young Delaware's answer. At length, he said, "Why, Miss Lucy, you see, much of what the lad says is as plain to me as the sight on my rifle: for the tribes of the Lenapé are as well known to me as the *totems* of the Oggibeways. The Great nation is divided into three tribes:—the Minsi, or the Wolf-tribe (sometimes called also Puncsit, or round-foot); the Unalacticos, or the Turkey-tribe, and the *Unamis*, or the Tortoise-tribe. The last are considered the principal and most ancient; and as Wingenund's family are of this band, he spoke just now of their wise men. But who, or what kin' o' crittur this Prairie-bird can be, would puzzle a Philadelphy lawyer to tell, let alone a poor hunter who knows little out of the line of his trade."

"Then, Baptiste," said Lucy, smiling; "your trade is a pretty extensive one, for I think you have more knowledge in your head on most subjects than half the lawyers and clerks in the Territory."

"There it is, Miss Lucy; you're always a givin' me a little dose of flattery, just as I give my patches a bit of grease to make the Doctor swallow his lead pills. You ladies think we're all alike,—young sparks, and tough old chaps like me,—if you do but dip our fingers into the honey-pot, you know we shall lick them as soon as your backs are turned! But it is getting late," he added, rising from his seat; "and I have much to say to this youth, who is already tired; with your leave, Miss, I will retire with him, and see that he has a comfortable sleeping-quarter, and that he wants for nothing."

"Pray do so," said Lucy; "let him be treated as if he were one of our own family. I am sure, dear papa, such would be your wish," she added, turning to her father.

"It is indeed, my child," said the Colonel. "Wingenund, again I beg you to receive a father's best thanks for your brave defence of his son."

"It was nothing," replied the boy, modestly. "You are all good, too good to Wingenund; when he gets to the Far Prairie, he will tell the Prairie-bird and the Black Father to speak to the Great Spirit, that He may smile on my white father, and on my brother; and," he added, slowly raising his dark eloquent eyes to Lucy's face, "that he may send down pleasant sunshine and refreshing dew on the Lily of Mooshanne." So saying, he turned and left the room, accompanied by the Guide.

"Well," exclaimed the Colonel, as the youth disappeared, "they may call that lad a savage; but his feelings, ay, and his manners too, would put to shame those of many who think themse ves fine gentlemen."

"He is, indeed, a noble young fellow," said Reginald, "and worthy to be the relative and pupil of my Indian brother. I would that you had seen *him*, father: you are in general rather sceptical as to the qualities of the Redskins. I think the War-Eagle would surprise you!"

"Indeed, Reginald," said the Colonel, "I have seen among them so much cruelty, cunning, and drunkenness, that the romantic notions which I once entertained respecting them are completely dissipated. Nevertheless, I confess that many of their worst faults have arisen from their commerce with the whites; and they still retain some virtues which are extremely rare among us."

"To which do you allude?" inquired Reginald.

"More especially, to patience under suffering, a padlocked mouth when entrusted with a secret, and unshaken fidelity in friendship."

"These are indeed high and valuable qualities," replied Reginald. "Moreover, it strikes me that in one principal feature of character the Indian is superior to us; he acts up to his creed. That creed may be entirely based on error; it may teach him to prefer revenge to mercy, theft to industry, violence to right; but such as he has learnt it from his fathers, he acts up to it more firmly and consistently than we do, 'who know the right, and still the wrong pursue.'"

"Your observation is just," replied his father; "they are benighted, and do many of the *deeds of darkness. What shall we say of those who do them under the light of* a noon-day sun?"

"And yet," said Lucy, "this Wingenund seems half a Christian, and more than half a gentleman, either by nature, or by the instructions of the strange being he calls the Prairie bird!"

"Upon my word, Lucy," said her brother with a malicious smile, "I thought, while the lad was speaking of his sister on the Prairie, his eyes were strangely fixed upon the white lady in the wigwam. It is fortunate he is going soon; and still more fortunate that a certain cruizing captain is not returned from the West Indies." As this impertinent speech was made in a whisper, it did not reach Aunt Mary or the Colonel; and the only reply it drew from Lucy, was a blushing threat of a repetition of the same punishment which she had inflicted in the morning for a similar offence. He begged pardon, and was forgiven; soon after which the little party broke up and retired to rest.

Meantime Baptiste, who knew that the well-intentioned offer of a bed-room and its comforts would be a great annoyance to Wingenund, took the lad out with him to a dry barn behind the house, where there was an abundant supply of clean straw, and where he intended to lodge him for the night. "Wingenund," said he, "you will rest here for some hours; but we must go along before daylight to meet War-Eagle, according to my promise."

"I will be ready," replied the youth; and casting himself down on a bundle of straw, in five minutes his wounds and fatigues were forgotten in a refreshing sleep, over which hovered the bright dreams of youth, wherein the sweet tones of his sister's voice were confused with the blue eyes of Lucy; and yet withal a sleep, such as guilt can never know, and the wealth of the Indies cannot purchase.

Before three o'clock on the following morning, the Guide re-entered the barn with a light step; not so light, however, as to escape the quick ear of the young Indian, who leaped from his straw couch, and throwing his rifle over his shoulder, stood before the hunter. "I hope you slept well," said the latter, "and that your arm gives you less pain?"

"I slept till you came," said the boy, "and the pain sleeps still. I feel nothing of it."

"Wingenund will be like his father," said the Guide. "He will laugh at pain, and fatigue, and danger; and his war-path will be sprinkled with the blood of his enemies".

The youth drew himself proudly up, and though gratified by the Guide's observation, merely replied, "The Great Spirit knows.—I am ready; let us go."

Baptiste had provided a couple of horses, and they started at a brisk pace, as he wished to reach the spot where he had appointed to meet War-Eagle soon after day-light. To one less familiar with the woods, the tangled and winding path, through which he led the way, would have offered many impediments; but Baptiste went rapidly forward without hesitation or difficulty, Wingenund following in silence; and after a brisk ride of three hours they came to an opening in the forest, where a log-hut was visible, and beyond it the broad expanse of Ohio's stream.

The Guide here whispered to Wingenund to remain concealed in the thicket with the horses

while he reconnoitered the hut; because he knew that it was sometimes used as a shelter and a rendezvous, by some of the lawless and desperate characters on the borders of the settlements.

Having finished his examination, and ascertained that the hut was empty, he returned to Wingenund, and desired him to come down to the water's edge, where he was to make a signal for War-Eagle, who ought to be now at no great distance. The youth accordingly went to the river's bank, and understanding from the Guide that there was no occasion for farther concealment, he gave three whistles in a peculiar tone, but exceedingly loud and shrill. For some time they listened for a reply. Nothing was heard, except the tap of the woodpecker upon the bark of the elm, and the notes of the various feathered choristers chirping their matin song.

After a pause of several minutes, the Guide said, "Surely some accident has detained War-Eagle! Perhaps he has failed in getting the canoe. Repeat the signal, Wingenund."

"War-Eagle is here," replied the youth, who was quietly leaning on his rifle, with an abstracted air.

Again the Guide listened attentively; and as he was unable to distinguish the slightest sound indicative of the chief's approach, he was rather vexed at the superior quickness implied in Wingenund's reply, and said somewhat testily, "A moose might hear something of him, or a bloodhound might find the wind of him, but I can make out nothing, and my ears an't used to be stuffed with cotton, neither!"

"Grande-Hâche is a great warrior, and Wingenund would be proud to follow in his war-path; eyes and ears are the gift of the Great Spirit."

"How know you that War-Eagle is here?" inquired the Guide impatiently.

"By that," replied the boy, pointing to a scarcely perceptible mark on the bank a few yards from his feet, "that is the mocassin of the War-Eagle; he has been to the hut this morning; below that foot-print you will see on the sand the mark of where his canoe has touched the ground."

"The boy is right," muttered Baptiste, examining the marks carefully. "I believe I am no hunter, but an ass after all, with no better ears and eyes than Master Perrot, or any other parlour-boarder."

In a very few minutes the sound of the paddle was heard, and War-Eagle brought his canoe to the bank; a brief conversation now took place between him and Baptiste, in which some particulars were arranged for Reginald's visit to the Western Prairie. The Guide then taking from his wallet several pounds of bread and beef, and a large parcel of tobacco, added these to the stores in the bottom of the canoe, and having shaken hands heartily with the chief and Wingenund, returned leisurely on his homeward way; but he still muttered to himself as he went; and it was evident that he could not shake off the annoyance which he felt at being "out-crafted," as he called it, "by a boy!"

We will not follow the tedious and toilsome voyage of War-Eagle and his young friend, in the canoe, a voyage in which after descending the Ohio, they had to make their way up the Mississippi to its junction with the Missouri, and thence up the latter river to the mouth of the Osage river, which they also ascended between two and three hundred miles before they rejoined their band. It is sufficient for the purposes of our tale to inform the reader that they reached their destination in safety, and that Wingenund recovered from the effects of his severe wound.

When Baptiste returned to Mooshanne, he found the family surprised and annoyed at the sudden disappearance of their young Indian guest; but when he explained to Reginald that he had gone to rejoin his chief by War-Eagle's desire, Reginald felt that the best course had been adopted, as the boy might, if he had remained, have fallen in the way of the exasperated party who were seeking to revenge Hervey's death.

It was about noon when Mike Smith, and several of those who accompanied him the preceding day, arrived at Mooshanne, and insisted upon Baptiste shewing them the spot where he had told them that an Indian had been recently buried. Reginald declined being of the party, which set forth under the conduct of the Guide, to explore the scene of the occurrences mentioned in a former chapter.

During their absence, Reginald was lounging in his sister's boudoir, talking with her over the events of the preceding days, when they heard the sound of a vehicle driven up to the door, and the blood rushed into Lucy's face as the thought occurred to her that it might be Ethelston; the delusion was very brief, for a moment afterwards the broad accent of David Muir was clearly distinguishable, as he said to his daughter, "Noo Jessie, haud a grip o' Smiler, while I gie a pull at the door-bell."

Much to the surprise of the worthy "Merchaunt," (by which appellation David delighted to be designated,) the door was opened by no less a personage than Monsieur Gustave Perrot himself, who seeing the pretty Jessie in her father's spring-cart, hastened with characteristic gallantry, to assist her to descend; in the performance of which operation he extended both his hands to support her waist, saying in his most tender tone, "Take care, Miss Jessie; now shump, and trust all your leetle weight with me."

But while he was speaking, the active girl putting one foot on the step and touching him lightly on the arm, stood on the ground beside him.

"Weel, Mr. Parrot, and how's a wi ye the day," said David, who was busily employed in extracting various packages and parcels from the cart.

"All ver' well, thank you, Mr. Muir; wonderful things happen, though. My young Mr. Reginald he be drowned and stabbed, and quite well!"

"Gude save us!" said David, in horror; "drowned, and stabbed, and quite well!" Ye're surely no in earnest, Mr. Parrot!"

"I speak only the truth always,—Miss Jessie, the fresh air and the ride make your cheek beautiful rosy."

"Mr. Perrot," replied Jessie, smiling, "you

ompliment! You are so gallant a ——man, you should praise the roses in a lady's cheek without mentioning that she owes them to a rough road and a fresh breeze!"

This dialogue on roses was here interrupted by David, who said, "May be, Mr. Parrot, ye'll just let Smiler be ta'en round to the stable, and desire ane o' the lads to help us in with these wa parcels; yon muckle basket, there, is brimull of all the newest kick-shaws, and modes, as them call 'em, frae Philadelphy, so Jessie's just come wi' me, to gie Miss Lucy the first choice;—and she's a right to hae it too, for she's the bonniest and the best young lady in the Territory."

Mr. Perrot having given these necessary orders, David, with his papers, was soon closeted with the colonel, in his business room; and Jessie was ushered into the young lady's boudoir, where her brother still sat, with the intention of giving his sister the benefit of his advice in the selection of, what David called, kickshaws and modes, for her toilet. Meanwhile Perrot was preparing a formidable attack upon Jessie's heart, through the medium of some venison steaks, a delicate ragout of squirrel, and sundry other tit-bits, with which he hoped to propitiate the village beauty. As Jessie entered the room, her salutation of Lucy was modestly respectful; and she returned Reginald's bow with an unembarrassed and not ungraceful courtesy. While she was drawing out, and placing on a table, the silken contents of her basket, Reginald inquired of her whether any news was stirring in Marietta.

"None," she replied, "except the killing of Hervey. All the town is speaking of it, and they say it will cause more bloodshed; for Mike Smith vows, if he cannot find the real offender, he'll shoot down the first Indian he finds in the woods."

"Mike Smith is a hot-headed fool," replied Reginald; but remembering sundry reports which had reached his ear, he added, "I beg your pardon, Miss Jessie, if the words give you offence."

"Indeed you have given none, Master Reginald," said Jessie, colouring a little at the implied meaning of his words; "Mike comes very often to our store, but I believe it is more for whiskey than anything else."

"Nay," said Reginald; "I doubt you do him injustice. The say he prefers the end of the store which is the furthest from the bar."

"Perhaps he may," replied Jessie; "I am always better pleased when he stays away, for ne is very ill-tempered and quarrelsome! Well, miss," she continued, "are not these pink ribbons beautiful, and these two light shawls?—they come from the British East India House."

"They are indeed the prettiest and most delicate that I ever saw," replied Lucy; "and see here, Reginald," said she, drawing him aside, "these French bead necklaces will do famously for some of your Delaware friends." She added in a whisper, "ask her if there is no other news at the town."

"What about," inquired her brother. A silent look of reproach was her only reply, as she turned away, and again busied herself with the silks. He was instantly conscious and ashamed of his *thoughtlessness, which, after a few moments'* silence, he proceeded to repair, saying, "Pray tell me, Miss Jessie, has your father received no intelligence of the 'Pride of the Ohio.'"

"Alas! not a word," replied the girl, in a tone of voice so melancholy, that it startled them both.

"But why speak you in so sad a voice about the vessel, Jessie, if you have heard no bad news regarding her?" said Reginald, quickly.

"Because, sir, she has been very long over due, and there are many reports of French ships of war; and we, that is, my father, is much interested about her."

Poor Lucy's colour came and went; but she had not the courage to say a word. After a short pause, Reginald inquired, "Have any boats come up lately from New Orleans?"

"Yes, sir, Henderson's came up only a few days ago, and Henry Gregson, who had been down on some business for my father, returne in her."

"That is the young man who assists your father in the store? I believe he is a son of the mate on board the Pride. I have remarked that he is a very fine looking young fellow!"

"He is the son of Captain Ethelston's mate," said Jessie, casting down her eyes, and busying herself with some of her ribbons and silks "But I hope," she continued, "that you, Mr Reginald, are not seriously hurt. Mr. Perrot told me you had been drowned and stabbed!"

"Not quite so bad as that," said Reginald, laughing; "I had, indeed, a swim in the Muskingum, and a blow from a horse's hoof, but am none the worse for either. Do not forget, Miss Jessie, to send off a messenger immediately that any news arrive of the Pride. You know what a favourite she is, and how anxious we are here about her!"

"Indeed I will not forget," replied Jessie.

Lucy sighed audibly; and, after purchasing a few ribbons and shawls, as well as a stock of beads for her brother, she allowed Jessie to retire, begging, at the same time, her acceptance of one of the prettiest shawls in her basket. As the latter hesitated about receiving it, Lucy threw it over the girl's shoulder, saying playfully, "Nay, Jessie, no refusal; I am mistress here; and nobody, not even Mr. Reginald, disputes my will in this room!"

Jessie thanked the young lady, and, saluting her brother, withdrew to a back parlour, where Monsieur Perrot had already prepared his good things, and where her father only waited her coming to commence a dinner which his drive had made desirable. and which his olfactory nerves told him was more savory than the viands set before him at Marietta by Mrs. Christie.

"Call ye this a squirrel ragoo?" said the worthy Merchaunt; "weel now it's an awfu' thing to think how the Lord's gifts are abused in the auld country! I hae seen dizens o' they wee deevils lilting and louping amaing the woods in the Lothians; and yet the hungry chaps wha' can scarce earn a basin o' porritch, or a pot o' kail to their dinner, would as soon think o' eatin' a stoat or a foumart!"

While making this observation, Davie was dispatching the "ragoo" with a satisfaction which showed how completely he had overcome his insular prejudices. Nor were Perrot's culinary attentions altogether lost upon Miss Jessie;

r although she might not repay them entirely cording to the wishes of the gallant Maitre Hotel, she could not help acknowledging that was a pleasant, good-humoured fellow, and t his abilities as a cook were of the highest der. Accordingly, when he offered her a ming glass of cider, she drank it to his health, h a glance of her merry eye sufficient to have ned the head of a man less vain and amorous n Monsieur Perrot.

The dinner passed pleasantly enough; and as vid Muir drove his daughter back to Marietta, heart being warmed and expanded by the erous cider (which, for the good of his health, ad crowned with a glass of old rum), he said, ssie, I'm thinkin' that Maister Perrot is a ce and clever man; a lassie might do waur 1 tak' up wi the like o' him! I'se warrant nest will no be ill feathered!"

Perhaps not," replied Jessie; and turning head away, she sighed, and thought of Henry gson.

CHAPTER XIII.

ach the reader will find that the cough of an invalid perils not less formidable than those which are to ncountered at sea.

E left Ethelston stretched on a sick couch adaloupe, in the house of Captain L'Estie, and tended by his daughter Nina, and r brother, the young lieutenant. The latew daily more attached to the patient, who been his captor, and was now his prisoner; bu was obliged, as soon as Ethelston was proced out of danger, to sail for Europe, as he wixious to obtain that professional distinctiohich his parole prevented his gaining in sere against the United States. And in Fre there seemed a promising harvest of cort and of glory, sufficient to satisfy the mal enthusiasm even of the most adventurou her sons. When he sailed, he again andain pressed upon his sister to bestow eve attention upon Ethelston; and as the Cap was much busied with his command, and Madame L'Estrange was entirely devoted her boudoir,—where, with two chattering parro to amuse her, and a little black girl to fan h while listlessly poring over the pages of Flori in a fauteuil,—the whole charge devolved up the willing and kind-hearted Nina. She was third and youngest daughter of Monsieurnd Madame L'Estrange; but (her two elder sters being married) she was the only one rident with her parents.

Sixen summers had now passed over her, and hdisposition was like that of her brother, fran impetuous, and warm-hearted. Her feelinghad never been guided or regulated by her halsome, but indolent mother; her mind had bea allowed to seek its food at hap-hazard, among e romances, poems, and plays upon the shelves the drawing-room. Her father spoiled, andher brother petted her. A governess also shead, whom she governed, and to whose instructins she owed little, except a moderate proficiency in music. Her countenance was a very beatiful mirror, reflecting the warm and impassioed features of her character. Her complexin was dark, though clear, and her hair black and glossy. The pencilling of her eyebrows was exceedingly delicate; and the eyes themselves were large, speaking, and glowing with that humid lustre, which distinguishes Creole beauty. Nothing could exceed the rosy fulness of her lip, and the even whiteness of the teeth which her joyous smile disclosed. Her figure was exquisitely proportioned, and her every movement a very model of natural grace. She seemed, indeed, impregnated with the fervour of the sunny climate in which she had been reared; and her temper, her imagination, her passions, all glowed with its ardent, but dangerous warmth. According to the usage of her country, she had been betrothed, when a child, to a neighbouring planter, one of the richest in the island; but as he was absent in Europe, and there remained yet two years before the time fixed for the fulfilment of the contract, she rarely troubled her head about the marriage, or her future destiny.

Such was the girl who now officiated as nurse to Ethelston, and who, before she had seen him, had gathered from her brother such traits of his character, as had called forth all the interest and sympathy of her romantic disposition. Although not eminently handsome, we have before noted that his countenance was manly and expressive, and his manners courteous and engaging. Perhaps also the weakness remaining after the crisis of his fever, imparted, to the usually gentle expression of his features, that touching attraction, which is called by a modern poet "a loving languor." At all events, certain it is, that ere poor Nina had administered the third saline draught to her grateful patient, her little heart beat vehemently; and when she had attended his feverish couch one short week, she was desperately in love!

How fared it in the meantime with Ethelston? Did his heart run any risk from the dark eloquent eyes, and the gracefully rounded form of the ministering angel who hovered about his sick room? At present none, for Lucy was shrined there; and he had been taught by young L'Estrange to consider his sister in the light of a nursery-girl, still under the dominion of the governess.

Days and weeks elapsed, Ethelston's recovery progressed, and he was able to stroll in the shade of the orange and citron-groves, which sheltered Captain L'Estrange's villa to the northward Here, with his eyes fixed on the sea, would he sometimes sit for hours, and devise schemes for returning to his home. On these occasions he was frequently accompanied by Nina, who walked by his side with her guitar in her hand; and under the pretence of receiving instructions from him in music, she would listen with delight, and hang with rapture, on every syllable that he uttered. Though he could not avoid being sensible of her ripening beauty, his heart was protected by the seven-fold shield of a deep and abiding attachment; and as he still looked upon Nina as a lovely girl, completing her education in the nursery, he gladly gave her all the assistance that she asked under her musical difficulties; and this he was able to do, from having made no small proficiency in the science during his long residence in Germany.

Sometimes he paid his respects to Madame L'Estrange; but that lady was so indolent, and

so exclusively devoted to her parrots and her lap-dog, that his visits to her were neither frequent, nor of long duration. The Captain was very seldom ashore; and thus Ethelston was obliged to spend his time alone, or in the society of the young girl who had nursed him so kindly during his illness. Her character seemed to have undergone a sudden and complete change. The conquering god, who had at first only taken possession of the outworks of her fancy, had now made himself master of the citadel of her heart. She loved with all the intense, absorbing passion of a nature that had never known control. The gaiety and buoyancy of her spirits had given place to a still, deep flood of feeling, which her reason never attempted to restrain. Even when with *him* she spoke little. Her happiness was too intense to find a vent in words; and thus she nursed and fed a flame, that needed only the breath of accident to make it burst forth with a violence that should burn up, or overleap all the barriers of self-control.

Nor must the reader imagine that Ethelston was dull or blind, because he observed not the state of Nina's affections. His own were firmly rooted elsewhere; he was neither of a vain, nor a romantic disposition; and he had been duly informed by Monsieur L'Estrange, that in the course of two years Nina was to be married to Monsieur Bertrand, the young planter, to whom, as we have before mentioned, she had been betrothed by her parents since her thirteenth year. He could not help seeing that although her intellect was quick, and her character enthusiastic, her education had been shamefully neglected both by Madame L'Estrange and the governess. Hence he spoke, counselled, and sometimes chid her, in the tone of an elder brother, heedless of the almost imperceptible line that separates friendship from love in the bosom of a girl nurtured under a West Indian sun.

In this state were matters, when, on a fine evening, Ethelston strolled alone into his favourite orange-grove, to look out upon the ocean, and in the enjoyment of its refreshing breeze, to ruminate on his strange captivity, and revolve various plans of escape.

Captain L'Estrange had paid a visit to his home on the preceding day, and finding his prisoner so completely restored to health and strength, had said to him, jokingly, "Indeed, fair sir, I think I must put you on your parole, or in chains; for after the character given of you by my son, I cannot allow so dangerous a person to be at large during the continuance of hostilities between our respective nations."

Ethelston answered half in earnest, and half in jest, "Nay, sir, then I must wear the chains, for assuredly I cannot give my parole; if an American vessel were to come in sight, or any other means of flight to offer itself, depend upon it, in spite of the kindness and hospitality I have met with here, I should weigh anchor in a moment."

"Well, that is a fair warning," said the old commodore; "nevertheless I will not lock you up just yet, for I do not think it very likely that any strange sail will come under the guns of our fort; and I will run the risk of your flying away on the back of a sea-gull." Thus had they parted; and the old gentleman was again *absent on a cruise.*

Ethelston was, as we have said, reclining listlessly under an orange-tree, inhaling the cool breeze, laden with the fragrance of its blossoms, now devising impossible plans of escape, and now musing on a vision of Lucy's graceful figure gliding among the deep woods around Montanne. As these thoughts passed through his mind, they imparted a melancholy shade to his brow, and a deep sigh escaped from his lips.

It was echoed by one yet deeper, close to his ear; and starting from his reverie, he beheld Nina, who had approached him unawares, and who, leaning on her guitar, had been for the last few minutes gazing on his countenance with an absorbed intensity, more fond and riveted than that with which the miser regards his treasure, or the widowed mother her only child.

When she found herself perceived, she came forward, and covering her emotion under an assumed gaiety, she said, "What is my kind instructor thinking of? He seems more pale and sad than usual."

"He is thinking," said Ethelston, good-humouredly, "that he ought to scold a certain young lady very severely for coming upon him slily, and discovering that gravity and sadness in which a captive must sometimes indulge, but which her presence has already dissipated."

"Nay," said Nina, still holding her guitar, and sitting down on the bank near him; "you know that I am only obeying papa's orders in watching you; for he says you would not give your parole, and I am sure you were thinking of your escape from Guadaloupe."

"Perhaps you might have guessed more wide of the mark, Mademoiselle Nina," said Ethelston.

"And are you then so very anxious to leave—see your home again?" inquired Nina, hesitating.

"Judge for yourself, Nina," he replied, "when I remind you that for many months I have heard nothing of those who have been my nearest and dearest friends from childhood; nothing of the brave men who were captured with me when our poor brig was lost!"

"Tell me about your friends, and your home. Is it very beautiful? Have you the warm sun, and the fresh sea-breeze, and the orange flowers, that we have here?"

"Scarcely," replied Ethelston, smiling at the earnest rapidity with which the beautiful girl founded her inquiries on the scene before her, "but we have in their place rivers on the ocean of which your father's frigate might sail; groves and woods of deep shade, impenetrable to the rays of the hottest sun: and prairies filling with the most brilliant and variegated flowers."

"Oh! how I should love to see that land!" exclaimed Nina, her fervid imagination instantly grasping and heightening its beauties. 'How I should love to dwell there!"

"Nay, it appears to me not unlikely that you may at some time visit it," replied Ethelston. "This foolish war between our countries will soon be over, and your father may wish to see a region the scenery of which is so magnificent, and which is not difficult of access from here."

"Papa will never leave these islands unless he goes to France, and that he hates," said Nina.

"Well then," continued Ethelston, smiling,

as he alluded for the first time to her marriage, "you must defer your American trip a year or two longer; then, doubtless, Monsieur Bertrand will gladly gratify your desire to see the Mississippi."

Nina started as if stung by an adder; the blood rushed and mantled over her face and neck; her eyes glowed with indignation, as she exclaimed, "I abhor and detest Monsieur Bertrand. I would die before I would marry him!" Then adding in a low voice, the sadness of which went to his heart, "and this from you too!" She covered her face with her hands and wept.

Never was man more astonished than Ethelston at the sudden storm which he had inadvertently raised. Remembering that Madame L'Estrange had told him of the engagement as being known to Nina, he had been led to suppose from her usual flow of spirits, that the prospect was far from being disagreeable to her. Young L'Estrange had also told him that Bertrand was a good-looking man, of high character, and considered, from his wealth, the best match in the French islands; so that Ethelston was altogether unprepared for the violent aversion which Nina now avowed for the marriage, and for the grief by which she seemed so deeply agitated. Still he was as far as ever from divining the true cause of her emotion, and conjectured that she had probably formed an attachment to one of the young officers on board her father's ship. Under this impression he took her hand, and sympathising with the grief of one so fair and so young, he said to her, kindly, "Forgive me, Nina, if I have said anything to hurt your feelings; indeed I always have believed that your engagement to Monsieur Bertrand was an affair settled by your parents entirely with your consent. I am sure Monsieur L'Estrange loves his favourite child too well to compel her to a marriage against her inclination. Will you permit your Mentor (as you have more than once allowed me to call myself) to speak with him on the subject?"

Nina made no reply, and the tears coursed each other yet faster down her cheek.

"Your brother is absent," continued Ethelston; "you seem not to confide your little secrets to your mother—will you not let me aid you by my advice? I am many years older than you.—I am deeply grateful for all your kindness during my tedious illness; believe me, I will, if you will only trust me, advise you with the affectionate interest of a parent, or an elder brother."

The little hand trembled violently in his, but still no reply escaped from Nina's lips.

"If you will not tell me your secret," pursued Ethelston, "I must guess it. Your aversion to the engagement arises not so much from your dislike to Monsieur Bertrand, as from your preference of some other whom perhaps your parents would not approve?"

The hand was withdrawn, being employed in an ineffectual attempt to check her tears. The slight fillet which bound her black tresses had given way, and they now fell in disorder, veiling the deep crimson glow which again mantled over the neck of the weeping girl.

Ethelston gazed on her with emotions of deep sympathy. There was a reality, a dignity about her speechless grief that must have moved a sterner heart than his; and as he looked upon the heaving of her bosom, and upon the exquisite proportions unconsciously developed in her attitude, he suddenly felt that he was speaking not to a child in the nursery, but to a girl in whose form and heart the bud and blossom of womanhood were thus early ripened. It was, therefore, in a tone, not less kind, but more respectful than he had hitherto used, that he said, "Nay, Nina, I desire not to pry into your secrets—I only wish to assure you of the deep sympathy which I feel with your sorrow, and of my desire to aid or comfort you by any means within my power; but if my curiosity offends you, I will retire in the hope that your own gentle thoughts may soon afford you relief."

Again the little hand was laid upon his arm, as Nina, still weeping, whispered, "No, no,—you do not offend me.—Do not leave me, I entreat you!"

A painful silence ensued, and Ethelston more than ever confirmed in the belief that she had bestowed her affections on some young middy, or lieutenant, under her father's command, continued in a tone which he attempted to render gay: "Well then, Nina, since you will not give your confidence to Mentor, he must appoint himself your confessor; and to commence, he is right in believing that your dislike to Monsieur Bertrand arises from your having given your heart elsewhere?"

There was no reply; but her head was bowed in token of acquiescence!

"I need not inquire," he pursued, "whether the object of your choice is, in rank and character, worthy of your affection?"

In an instant the drooping head was raised, and the dark tresses thrown back from her brow, as, with her eyes flashing through the moisture by which they were still bedewed, Nina replied, "Worthy!—worthy the affection of a queen!"

Ethelston, startled by her energy, was about to resume his inquiries, when Nina, whose excited spirit triumphed for the moment over all restraint, stopped him, saying, "I will spare you the trouble of farther questions. I will tell you freely, that till lately, very lately, I cared for none.—Monsieur Bertrand and all others were alike to me; but fate threw a stranger in my path.—He was a friend of my brother;—he was wounded.—For hours and hours I watched by his couch;—he revived;—his looks were gentle; his voice was music.—I drew counsel from his lips;—he filled my thoughts, my dreams, my heart, my being! But he—he considered me only as a silly child;—he understood not my heart;—he mocked my agony;—he saved my brother's life,—and is now accomplishing the sister's death!"

The excitement which supported Nina during the commencement of this speech, gradually died away. Towards its close, her voice grew tremulous, and as the last words escaped her quivering lips, exhausted nature gave way under the burden of her emotion, and she fainted!

The feelings of Ethelston may be better imagined than described. As the dreadful import of the poor girl's words gradually broke upon him, his cheeks grew paler and paler; and when, at their conclusion, her senseless form lay ex-

ended at his feet, the cold dew of agony stood in drops upon his forehead! But Nina's condition demanded immediate aid and attention. Mastering himself by a powerful effort, he snatched a lemon from a neighbouring tree; he cut it in half, and sustaining the still insensible girl, he chafed her hands, and rubbed her temples with the cool refreshing juice of the fruit. After a time, he had the consolation of seeing her restored gradually to her senses; and a faint smile came over her countenance as she found herself supported by his arm. Still she closed her eyes, as if in a happy dream, which Ethelston could not bring himself to disturb; and, as the luxuriant black tresses only half veiled the touching beauty of her countenance, he groaned at the reflection that he had inadvertently been the means of shedding the blight of unrequited love on a budding flower of such exquisite loveliness. A long silence ensued, softened, rather than interrupted, by the low wind as it whispered through the leaves of the orange grove; while the surrounding landscape, and the wide expanse of ocean, glowed with the red golden tints of the parting sun. No *unplighted* heart could have resisted all the assailing temptations of that hour. But Ethelston's heart was not unplighted; and the high principle and generous warmth of his nature served only to deepen the pain and sadness of the present moment. He formed, however, his resolution; and as soon as he found that Nina was restored to consciousness and to a certain degree of composure, he gently withdrew the arm which had supported her, and said, in a voice of most melancholy earnestness, "Dear Nina! I will not pretend to misunderstand what you have said.—I have much to tell you; but I have not now enough command over myself to speak, while you are still too agitated to listen. Meet me here to-morrow at this same hour; meanwhile, I entreat you, recal those harsh and unkind thoughts which you entertained of me; and believe me, dear, dear sister, that I would, rather than have mocked your feelings, have died on that feverish couch, from which your care revived me." So saying, he hastened from her presence in a tumult of agitation scarcely less than her own.

For a long time she sat motionless, in a kind of waking dream; his parting words yet dwelt in her ear, and her passionate heart construed them now according to its own wild throbbings, now according to its gloomiest fears. "He has much to tell me," she mused; "he called me dear Nina; he spoke not in a voice of indifference: his eye was full of a troubled expression that I could not read. Alas! alas 'twas only pity! He called me 'dear sister!'—what can he mean?—Oh that to-morrow were come! I shall not outlive the night unless I can believe that he loves me!" And then she fell again into a reverie; during which all the looks and tones that her partial fancy had interpreted, and her too faithful memory had treasured, were recalled, and repeated in a thousand shapes; until exhausted by her agitation, and warned by the darkness of the hour, Nina retired to her sleepless couch.

Meanwhile Ethelston, when he found himself *alone in his room*, scrutinized with the most *unsparing severity his past* conduct, endeavouring to remember every careless or unheeded word by which he could have awakened or encouraged her unsuspected affection. He could only blame himself that he had not been more observant; that he had considered Nina too much in the light of a child; and had habitually spoken to her in a tone of playful and confidential familiarity. Thus, though his conscience acquitted him of the most remote intention of trifling with her feelings, he accused himself of having neglected to keep a watchful guard over his language and behaviour, and resolved, at the risk of incurring her anger or her hatred, to tell her firmly and explicitly on the morrow, that he could not requite her attachment as it deserved, his heart having been long and faithfully devoted to another.

CHAPTER XIV.

Narrating the trials and dangers that beset Ethelston, and how he escaped from them, and from the Island of Guadaloupe.

The night succeeding the occurrences related in the last chapter brought little rest to the pillow either of Nina or of Ethelston; and on the following day, as if by mutual agreement, they avoided each other's presence, until the hour appointed for their meeting again in the orange grove. Ethelston was firmly resolved to explain to her unreservedly his long engagement to Lucy, hoping that the feelings of Nina would prove, in this instance, rather impetuous than permanent. The tedious day appeared to her as if it never would draw to a close. She fled from her mother, and from the screaming parrots; she tried the guitar, but it seemed tuneless and discordant; her pencil and her book were, by turns, taken up, and as soon laid aside; she strolled even at mid-day into the orange grove, to the spot where she had last sat by him, and a blush stole over her cheek when she remembered that she had been betrayed into an avowal of her love: and then came the doubt, the inquiry, whether he felt any love for her? Thus did she muse and ponder, until the hours, which in the morning had appeared to creep so slowly over the face of the dial, now glided unconsciously forward. The dinner-hour had passed unheeded; and before she had summoned any of the courage and firmness which she meant to call to her aid, Ethelston stood before her. He was surprised at finding Nina on this spot, and had approached it long before the appointed time, in order that he might prepare himself for the difficult and painful task which he had undertaken. But though unprepared, his mind was of too firm and regulated a character to be surprised out of a fixed determination; and he came up and offered his hand to Nina, greeting her in his accustomed tone of familiar friendship. She received his salutation with evident embarrassment; her hand and her voice trembled, and her bosom throbbed in a tumult of anxiety and expectation. Ethelston saw that he could not defer the promised explanation; and he commenced it with his usual gentleness of manner, but with a firm resolve that he would be honest and explicit in his language. He began by referring to his long illness, and, with gratitude, to her care and at-

tention during its continuance; he assured her, that having been told both by Madame L'Estrange and her brother, that she was affianced to Monsieur Bertrand, he had accustomed himself to look on her as a younger sister, and, as such, had ventured to offer her advice and instruction in her studies. He knew not, he dreamed not, that she could ever look upon him in any other light than that of a Mentor.

Here he paused a moment, and continued in a deeper and more earnest tone, "Nina—dear Nina, we *must* be as Mentor and his pupil to each other, or we must part. I will frankly lay my heart open to you. I will conceal nothing; then you will not blame me, and will, I hope, permit me to remain your grateful friend and brother. Nina, I am not blind either to your beauty, or to the many, many graces of your disposition. I do full justice to the warmth and truth of your affections: you deserve, when loved, to be loved with a whole heart—"

"O spare this!" interrupted Nina, in a hurried whisper; "Spare this, speak of yourself!"

"I was even about to do so," continued Ethelston; "but, Nina, such a heart I have not to give. For many months and years, before I ever saw or knew you, I have loved, and still am betrothed to another."

A cold shudder seemed to pass through Nina's frame while these few words were spoken, as if in a moment the health, the hope, the blossom of her youth were blighted! Not a tear, not even a sob gave relief to her agony; her bloodless lip trembled in a vain attempt to speak she knew not what, and a burning chill sat upon her heart. These words may appear to some strange and contradictory: happy, thrice happy ye, to whom they so appear! If you have never known what it is to feel at once a scorching heat parching the tongue, and drying up all the well-springs of life within, while a leaden weight of ice seems to benumb the heart, then have you never known the sharpest, extreme pangs of disappointed love!

Ethelston was prepared for some sudden and violent expression on the part of Nina, but this death-like, motionless silence almost overpowered him. He attempted, by the gentlest and the kindest words, to arouse her from this stupor of grief. He took her hand; its touch was cold. Again and again he called her name; but her ear seemed insensible even to his voice. At length, unable to bear the sight of her distress, and fearful that he might no longer restrain his tongue from uttering words which would be treason to his first and faithful love, he rushed into the house, and hastily informing Nina's governess that her pupil had been suddenly taken ill in the olive-grove, he locked himself in his room, and gave vent to the contending emotions by which he was oppressed.

It was in vain that he strove to calm himself by the reflection that he had intentionally transgressed none of the demands of truth and honour;—it was in vain that he called up all the long-cherished recollections of his Lucy and his home;—still the image of Nina would not be banished; now presenting itself as he had seen her yesterday, in the full glow of passion, and in the full bloom of youthful beauty,—and now, as he had just left her, in the deadly paleness and fixed apathy of despair. The terrible thought that, whether guiltily or innocently, he had been the cause of all this suffering in one to whom he owed protection and gratitude, wrung his heart with pain that he could not repress; and he found relief only in falling on his knees, and praying to the Almighty that the sin might not be laid to his charge, and that Nina's sorrow might be soothed and comforted by Him, who is the God of consolation.

Meanwhile the governess had, with the assistance of two of the negro attendants, brought Nina into the house. The poor girl continued in the same state of insensibility to all that was passing around; her eyes were open, but she seemed to recognize no one, and a few vague indistinct words still trembled on her lips.

The doctor was instantly summoned, who pronounced, as soon as he had seen his patient, that she was in a dangerous fit, using sundry mysterious expressions about "febrile symptoms," and "pressure on the brain," to which the worthy leech added shakings of the head yet more mysterious.

For many days her condition continued alarming; the threatened fever came, and with it a protracted state of delirium. During this period Ethelston's anxiety and agitation were extreme; and proportionate was the relief that he experienced, when he learned that the crisis was past, and that the youthful strength of her constitution promised speedy recovery.

Meanwhile he had to endure the oft-repeated inquiries of the Governess, "How he happened to find Mademoiselle just as the fit came on?" and of Madame L'Estrange, "How it was possible for Nina to be attacked by so sudden an illness, while walking in the orange-grove?"

When she was at length pronounced out of danger, Ethelston again began to consider various projects for his meditated escape from the island. He had more than once held communication with his faithful Cupid on the subject, who was ready to brave all risks in the service of his master; but the distance which must be traversed, before they could expect to find a friendly ship or coast, seemed to exclude all reasonable hope of success.

It would be impossible to follow and pourtray the thousand changes that came over Nina's spirit during her recovery. She remembered but too well the words that Ethelston had last spoken; at one moment she called him perfidious, ungrateful, heartless; then she chid herself for railing at him, and loaded his name with every blessing, and the expression of the fondest affection; now she resolved that she would never see or speak to him more; then she thought that she must see him, if it were only to show how she had conquered her weakness. Amidst all these contending resolutions, she worked herself into the belief that Ethelston had deceived her, and that, because he thought her a child, and did not love her, he had invented the tale of his previous engagement to lessen her mortification. This soon became her settled conviction; and when it crossed her mind, she would start with passion and exclaim, "He shall yet love me, and me, alone!"

The only confidant of her love was a young negress who waited upon her, and who was indeed so devoted to her that she would have braved the Commodore's utmost wrath, or peril

d her life to execute her mistress's commands.

It happened one evening that this girl, whose name was Fanchette, went out to gather some fruit in the orange-grove; and while thus employed she heard the voice of some one speaking. On drawing nearer to the spot whence the sound proceeded, she saw Ethelston sitting under the deep shade of a tree, with what appeared a book before him.

Knowing that Nina was still confined to her room, he had resorted hither to consider his schemes without interruption, and was so busily employed in comparing distances, and calculating possibilities, on the map before him, that Fanchette easily crept to a place whence she could, unperceived, overhear and observe him. "I must and will attempt it," he muttered aloud to himself, "we must steal a boat. Cupid and I can manage it between us; my duty and my love both forbid my staying longer here; with a fishing-boat we might reach Antigua or Dominica, or at all events chance to fall in with an American or a neutral vessel. Poor dear Nina," he added, in a lower tone, "Would to God I had never visited this shore! *this*," he continued, drawing a locket from his breast, "this treasured remembrance of one far distant has made me proof against thy charms, cold to thy love, but not, as Heaven is my witness, unmoved or insensible to thy sufferings." So saying he relapsed into silent musing, and as he replaced the locket, Fanchette crept noiselessly from her concealment, and ran to communicate to her young mistress her version of what she had seen. Being very imperfectly skilled in English, she put her own construction upon those few words which she had caught, and thought to serve Nina best by telling her what she would most like to hear. Thus she described to her how Ethelston had spoken to himself over a map; how he had mentioned islands to which he would sail; how he had named her name with tenderness, and had taken something from his vest to press it to his lips."

Poor Nina listened in a tumult of joy; her passionate heart would admit no doubting suggestion of her reason. She was too happy to bear even the presence of Fanchette, and rewarding her for her good news by the present of a beautiful shawl which she wore at the moment, pushed the delighted little negress out of the room, and threw herself on a couch, where she repeated a hundred times that *he* had been to her orange-grove, where they had last parted, had named her name with tenderness, had pressed some token to his lips—what could that be? It might be a flower, a book, anything—it mattered not—so long as she only knew he loved her! Having long wept with impassioned joy, she determined to show herself worthy of his love, and the schemes which she formed, and resolved to carry into effect, evinced the wild force and energy of her romantic character. Among her father's slaves was one who, being a steady and skilful seaman, had the charge of a schooner (originally an American prize) which lay in the harbour, and which the Commodore sometimes used as a pleasure-yacht, or for short trips to other parts of the island: this man (*whose name was Jacques*) was not only a *great favourite with the* young lady, but was also smitten with the black eyes and plump charms of M'amselle Fanchette, who thus exercised over him a sway little short of absolute. Nina having held a conference with her abigail, sent for Jacques, who was also admitted to a confidential consultation, the result of which, after occurrences will explain to the reader. When this was over, she acquired rather than assumed a sudden composure and cheerfulness, the delights of a plot seemed at once to restore her to health; and on the following day she sent to request that Ethelston would come to see her in her boudoir where she received him with a calmness and self-possession for which he was altogether unprepared. "Mr. Ethelston," said she, as soon as he was seated, "I believe you still desire to escape from your prison, and that you are devising various plans for effecting that object; you will never succeed unless you call me into your counsel."

Ethelston, though extremely surprised at the composure of her manner and language, replied with a smile, "M'amselle Nina, I will not deny that you have rightly guessed my thoughts; but as your father is my jailor, I did not dare to ask your counsel in this matter."

"Well, Mr. Mentor," said the wayward girl, "how does your wisdom propose to act without my counsel?"

"I confess I am somewhat at a loss," said Ethelston, good-humouredly; "I must go either through the air or the water, and the latter, being my proper element, is the path which I would rather attempt."

"And what should you think of me, if I were to play the traitoress, and aid you in eluding the vigilance of my father, and afford the means of escape to so formidable an enemy?"

Ethelston was completely puzzled by this playful tone of banter in one whom he had last seen under a paroxysm of passion, and in whose dark eye there yet lurked an expression which he could not define; but he resolved to continue the conversation in the same spirit, and replied, "I would not blame you for this act of filial disobedience, and though no longer your father's prisoner, I would, if I escaped, ever remain his friend."

"And would you show no gratitude to the lady who effected your release?"

"I owe her already more—far more, than I can pay; and, for this last crowning act of her generosity and kindness, I would—"

As he hesitated, she inquired abruptly, "You would what, Ethelston?" For a moment she had forgotten the part she was acting, and both the look that accompanied these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, reminded him that he stood on the brink of a volcanic crater.

"I would give her any proof of my gratitude that she would deign to accept, yes *any*," he repeated earnestly, "even to life itself, knowing that she is too noble and generous to accept aught at my hands which faith and honour forbid me to offer."

Nina turned aside for a moment, overcome by her emotion; but recovering herself quickly, she added, in her former tone of pleasantry, "She will not impose any hard conditions; but to the purpose, has your sailor-eye noticed a certain little schooner anchored in the harbour?"

"W !" Ethelston, eagerly, "a beau

tiful craft of about twenty tons, on the other side of the bay!"

"Even the same."

"Surely I have! She is American built, and swims like a duck."

"Well then," replied Nina, "I think I shall do no great harm in restoring her to an American! How many men should you require to manage her?"

"I could sail her easily with one able seaman besides my black friend Cupid."

"Then," said Nina, "I propose to lend her to you; you may send her back at your convenience, and I will also provide you an able seaman; write me a list of the stores and articles which you will require for the trip, and send it me in an hour's time: prepare your own baggage, and be ready upon the shortest notice; it is now my turn to command and yours to obey. Good-bye, Mr. Mentor." So saying, she kissed her hand to him and withdrew.

Ethelston rubbed his eyes as if he did not believe their evidence. "Could this merry, ready-witted girl be the same as the Nina whom he had seen, ten days before, heart-broken, and unable to conceal or repress the violence of her passion?" The longer he mused, the more was he puzzled; and he came at length to a conclusion at which many more wise and more foolish than himself had arrived, that a woman's mind, when influenced by her affections, is a riddle hard to be solved. He had not, however, much time for reflection, and being resolved at all risks to escape from the island, he hastened to his room, and within the hour specified by Nina, sent her a list of the stores and provisions for the voyage.

Meanwhile Fanchette had not been idle, she had painted to Jacques, in the liveliest colours, the wealth, beauty, and freedom of the distant land of Ohio, artfully mingling with this description promises and allurements which operated more directly on the feelings of her black swain, so that the latter, finding himself entreated by Fanchette, and commanded by his young mistress, hesitated no longer to betray his trust and desert the Commodore.

Ethelston, having communicated the prosperous state of affairs to Cupid, and desired him to have all ready for immediate escape, hastened to obey another summons sent to him by Nina; he found her in a mood no less cheerful than before, and although she purposely averted her face, a smile, the meaning of which he could not define, played round the corner of her expressive mouth. Though really glad to escape homeward, and disposed to be grateful to Nina for her aid, he could not help feeling angry and vexed at the capricious eagerness with which she busied herself in contriving the departure of one to whom she had so lately given the strongest demonstration of tenderness; and although his heart told him that he could not love her, there was something in this easy and sudden withdrawal of her affection which wounded that self-love from which the best of men are not altogether free. These feelings gave an unusual coldness and constraint to his manner, when he inquired her farther commands.

To this question Nina replied by saying, "Then, Mr. Ethelston, you are quite resolved to leave us, and to risk all the chances and perils of [illegible]!"

"Quite," he replied: "it is my wish, my duty, and my firm determination; and I entered the room," he added almost in a tone of reproof, "desirous of repeating to you my thanks for your kind assistance."

Nina's countenance changed; but still averting it from Ethelston, she continued in a lower voice, "And do you leave us without pain without regret."

There was a tremor, a natural feeling in the tone in which she uttered these few words, that recalled to his mind all that he had seen her suffer, and drove from it the harsh thoughts which he had begun to entertain, and he answered in a voice from which his self-command could not banish all traces of emotion, "Dear Nina, I shall leave you with regret that would amount to misery, if I thought that my visit had brought any permanent unhappiness into this house. I desire to leave you as a Mentor should leave a beloved pupil—as a brother leaves a sister: with a full hope that when I am gone you will fulfil your parents' wishes, your own auspicious destinies, and that, after years and years of happiness among those whom Fate has decreed to be the companions of your life, you will look back upon me as upon a faithful adviser of your youth,—an affectionate friend who——"

Nina's nerves were not strung for the part she had undertaken; gradually her countenance had grown pale as marble; a choking sensation oppressed her throat, and she sunk in a chair, sobbing, rather than uttering, the word "Water." It was fortunately at hand, and having placed it in a glass by her side, Ethelston retired to the window to conceal his own emotion, and to allow time for that of Nina to subside.

After a few minutes she recovered her self-possession; and although still deadly pale, her voice was distinct and firm, as she said, "Ethelston, I am ashamed of this weakness; but it is over: we will not speak of the past, and will leave to fate the future. Now listen to me: all the arrangements for your departure will be complete by to-morrow evening. At an hour before midnight a small boat, with one man, will be at the Quai du Marché, below the place St. Louis. It is far from the fort, and there is no sentry near the spot; you can then row to the vessel and depart. But is it not too dangerous?" she added; "Can you risk it? for the wind whistles terribly, and I fear the approach of a hurricane!"

Ethelston's eye brightened as he replied, "A rough night is the fairest for the purpose, Nina."

"Be it so," she replied. "Now, in return for all that I have done for you, there is only one favour I have to ask at your hands."

"Name it," said Ethelston, eagerly.

"There is," she continued, "a poor sick youth in the town, the child of respectable parents in New Orleans; he desires to go home, if it be only to die there; and a nurse will take care of him on the passage if you will let him go with you?"

"Assuredly I will," said Ethelston; "and will take as much care of him as if he were my brother."

"Nay," said Nina, "they tell me he is ordered to be perfectly quiet, and no one attends him

e nurse; neither will he give any trouble, as the coxswain says there is a small cabin where he can remain alone and undisturbed."

"You may depend," said Ethelston, "that all your orders about him shall be faithfully performed; and I will see, if I live, that he reaches his home in safety."

"He and his nurse will be on board before you," said Nina: "and as soon as you reach the vessel, you have nothing to do but to escape as quick as you can. Now I must bid you farewell! I may not have spirits to see you again!" She held out her hand to him; it was cold as ice; her face was still half-averted, and her whole frame trembled violently.

Ethelston took the offered hand, and pressed it to his lips, saying, "A thousand, thousand thanks for all your kindness! If I reach home alive I will make your honoured father ample amends for the theft of his schooner; and if ever you have an opportunity to let me know that you are well and happy, do not forget that such news will always gladden my heart." He turned to look at her as he went; he doubted whether the cold rigid apathy of her form and countenance was that of despair or of indifference; but he dared not trust himself longer in her presence; and as he left the room she sunk on the chair against which she had been leaning for support.

When Ethelston found himself alone, he collected his thoughts, and endeavoured in vain to account for the strange deportment of Nina in bidding him farewell. The coolness of her manner, the abrupt brevity of her parting address, had surprised him; and yet the tremor, the emotion, amounting almost to fainting, the forced tone of voice in which she had spoken, all forbad him to hope that she had overcome her unhappy passion; he was grieved that he had scarcely parted from her in kindness, and the pity with which he regarded her was, for the moment, almost akin to love.

Shaking off this temporary weakness, he employed himself forthwith in the preparations for his departure; among the first of which was a letter, which he wrote to Captain L'Estrange, and left upon his table. On the following day he never once saw Nina; but he heard from one of the slaves that she was confined to her room by severe headach.

The wind blew with unabated force, the evening was dark and lowering, as, at the appointed hour, Ethelston, accompanied by his faithful Cupid, left the house with noiseless step. They reached the boat without obstruction; pushed off, and in ten minutes were safe on deck; the coxswain whispered that all was ready; the boat was hoisted up, the anchor weighed, and the schooner was soon dashing the foam from her bows on the open sea.

CHAPTER XV.

What took place at Mooshanne during the stay of Ethelston in Guadaloupe.—Departure of Reginald for the far-west.

While the events related in the last two chapters occurred at Guadaloupe, Reginald was busily employed at Mooshanne in completing the preparations for his projected visit to the Delawares, in the Far-west; he had (by putting in practice the instructions given him by War-Eagle respecting Nekimi) at length succeeded in gaining that noble animal's affection; he neighed at Reginald's approach, knew and obeyed his voice, fed from his hand, and received and returned his caresses, as he had before done those of his Indian master. It was when mounted on Nekimi that our hero found his spirit most exulting and buoyant; he gave him the rein on the broadest of the neighbouring prairies, and loved to feel the springy fleetness and untiring muscles of this child of the western desert. Sometimes, after a gallop of many miles, he would leap from the saddle, to look with pride and pleasure on the spirited eye, the full veins, the expanded nostril of his favourite; at other times he would ride him slowly through the most tangled and difficult ground, admiring the instinctive and unerring sagacity with which he picked his way.

Among Reginald's other accomplishments, he had learned in Germany to play not unskilfully on the horn; and constantly carrying his bugle across his shoulders, Nekimi grew so accustomed to the sound, that he would come to it from any distance within hearing of its call. It appeared to Reginald so probable that the bugle might render him good service on his summer excursion, that he not only practised his horse to it, but he prevailed on Baptiste to learn his various signals, and even to reply on another horn to some of the simplest of them. The honest guide's first attempts to sound the bugle were ludicrous in the extreme; but he good-humouredly persevered, until Reginald and he could, from a considerable distance, exchange many useful signals agreed upon between them, and of course intelligible to none but themselves. Among these were the following: "Beware!"—"Come to me,"—"Be still,"—"Bring my horse," and one or two others for hunting purposes, such as "A bear!"—"Buffalo!" To these they added a reply, which was always to signify "I understand." But if the party called was prevented from obeying, this signal was to be varied accordingly.

At the same time Reginald did not omit to learn from the guide a number of Delaware words and phrases, in order that when he arrived among his new friends he might not be altogether excluded from communication with such of them as should not understand English; in these preparations, and occasional hunts in company with Baptiste, his time would have glided on agreeably enough, had he not observed with anxiety the settled melancholy that was gradually creeping over his sister Lucy; it was in vain that he strove to comfort her by reminding her of the thousand trifling accidents that might have detained Ethelston in the West Indies, and have prevented his letters from reaching home. She smiled upon him kindly for his well-meant endeavours, and not only abstained from all complaint, but tried to take her part in conversation; yet he saw plainly that her cheerfulness was forced, and that secret sorrow was at her heart. She employed herself assiduously in tending her mother, whose health had of late become exceedingly precarious, and who was almost always confined to her apartments. Lucy worked by

her side, conversed with her, read to her, and did all in her power to hide from her the grief that possessed her own bosom. Reginald marked the struggle, which strengthened, if possible, the love that he had always felt for his exemplary and affectionate sister.

One day he was sitting with her in the boudoir, which commanded, as we have before observed, a view of the approach to the house, where they saw a horseman coming at full speed. As he drew near, he seemed to be a middle-aged man, wearing a broad-brimmed hat, a coarse over-coat, and loose trowsers; his knees were high up on the saddle, and he rode in so careless and reckless a manner, that it was marvellous how the uncouth rider could remain on his horse in a gallop. Reginald threw open the window; and as the strange-looking figure caught a sight of him, the steed was urged yet faster, and the broad-brimmed hat was waved in token of recognition.

"Now Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Reginald aloud; "'tis Gregson, the mate!" He turned towards his sister: the blood had fled from her cheeks and lip, her hands were clasped together, and she whispered in a voice scarcely articulate, "Heaven be merciful!"

"Nay, Lucy," said her sanguine brother, "why this grief? are you not glad that the Pride is returned?"

"Oh, Reginald!" said Lucy, looking on him reproachfully through the tears which now streamed from her eyes. "Think you that if *he* had been alive and well, he would have allowed another to come here before him! Go and speak to the man—I cannot see him—you will return and tell me all."

Reginald felt the reproof, and kissing her affectionately, hastened from the room.

Who shall attempt to lift the veil from Lucy's heart during the suspense of the succeeding minutes? It is fortunate for human nature, that at such a moment the mind is too confused to be conscious of its own sufferings; the mingled emotions of hope and fear, the half-breathed prayer,—the irresistible desire to learn, contending with the dread of more assured misery,—all these unite in producing that agony of suspense which it is impossible to describe in words, and of which the mind of the sufferer can scarcely realize afterwards a distinct impression.

After a short absence, Reginald returned, and said to his sister, "Lucy, Ethelston is not here, but he is alive and safe."

She hid her face in her brother's breast, and found relief in a flood of grateful tears. As soon as Lucy had recovered her composure, her brother informed her of Ethelston's captivity, and of the serious, though not dangerous wounds, that he had received; but he mingled with the narration such warm praises of his friend's heroic defence of the brig, and so many sanguine assurances of his speedy release and return, that her fears and her anxiety were for a time absorbed in the glow of pride with which she listened to the praises of her lover's conduct, and in the anticipation of soon having his adventures from his own lips. The faithful mate received a kind welcome from the Colonel, and though the latter had sustained a severe loss in the brig, he viewed it as a misfortune for which no one could be blamed; and directed all his anxiety and his inquiries to the condition of Ethelston, whom he loved as his own son.

"Depend on't, Colonel," said Gregson, "he'll come to no harm where he is, for L'Estrange is a fine old fellow, and Master Ethelston saved his son's neck from my cutlass. I was cuttin' at him in downright airnest, for my dander was up, and you know, Colonel, a man a'nt particular nice in a deck scurry like that!"

"And what made him so anxious to save the youngster?" inquired the Colonel.

"Why, I s'pose he thought the day was our own, and the leutenant too smart a lad to be roughly handled for naught; but the young madcap put a pistol-ball into his arm by way of thanks."

"Well, and did Ethelston still protect him?"

"Ay, sir, all the same. I've served with a number of captains o' one sort or other, smugglers, and slave-cruizers, and old Burt, that the Cuba pirates used to called Gunpowder Jack, but I will say I never saw a better man than Ethelston step a deck, whether it's 'up stick and make sail,' or a heavy gale on a lee-shore, or a game at long bowls, or a hammer-away fight at yard-arm to yard-arm, it's all one to our skipper, he's just as cool and seems as well pleased, as when it's a free breeze, a clear sea, and Black Cupid has piped to dinner."

"He is a gallant young fellow," said the Colonel, brushing a little moisture from the corner of his eye; "and we will immediately take all possible measures for his liberation, both by applying, through Congress, for his exchange, and by communicating with the French agents at New Orleans."

The conversation was protracted for some time, and after its termination, the mate having satisfied himself that the Mooshanne cider had lost none of its flavour, and that Monsieur Perrot's flask contained genuine cognac, returned in high spirits to Marietta.

The preparations for Reginald's expedition now went briskly forward, as the business which the Colonel wished him to transact with the trading companies, on the Mississippi did not admit of delay. A large canoe was fitted out at Marietta, capable of containing sixteen or eighteen persons, and possessing sufficient stowage for the provisions and goods required; the charge of it was given to an experienced Voyageur, who had more than once accompanied Baptiste in his excursions to the Upper Mississippi and the Great Lakes; he was a steady determined man, on whose fidelity reliance might be placed, and well calculated, from the firmness of his character, to keep in order the rough and sturdy fellows who formed his crew. Born and bred in that wild border region which now forms the State of Michigan, the woods, rapids, and lakes had been familiar to him from his childhood; unlike most of his tribe, he was singularly grave and taciturn; he always wore a bearskin cap, and whether in his bateau, his canoe, or his log-hut, his bed was of the same material, so that he was known only by the name of "Bearskin;" his paternal appellation, whatever it might have been originally, having become altogether obsolete and unknown. His crew consisted of four stout fellows, who, like most of the Indian borderers

were as skilful in the use of the paddle on the river as that of the rifle on the land. Among them was the gigantic form of Mike Smith, before mentioned in this narrative; all these were engaged by the Colonel, at a liberal salary, for six months, which was to be proportionately increased if they were detained in his service for a longer period. It was also settled that Monsieur Gustave Perrot should take his passage in the canoe; and to his care were entrusted the Indian presents, clothes, and other articles, which were his master's own property. Reginald had resolved to cross the Territory on horseback, accompanied by Baptiste, and he therefore meant to carry with him only such arms, and other articles, as were likely to be required on the journey.

The orders given to Bearskin were to make the best of his way, to St. Louis, and having delivered the letters with which he was entrusted, there to await Reginald's arrival. The cargo of the canoe consisted chiefly (with the exception of a full supply of arms and provisions) of powder, cutlery, clothes of various colours, paints, mirrors, and a great variety of beads. Her equipment was soon completed, and she left Marietta amid the cheers of the crowd assembled on the wooden pier in front of David Muir's store, the latter observing to our old friend the mate, who stood at his elbow, "I'm thinking, Maister Gregson, they chaps will hae eneugh o' the red-skin deevils, an' furkuntin' amongst a wheen wild trappers and daft neer-do-weels ayont the Mississippi! Weel a weel, ye maun just step ben and tak' a stoup o' cognac to the success o' Bearskin and his crew."

Although there was much in the merchant's harangue that was like Greek or Hebrew to the mate, the closing invitation being adapted as well to his comprehension as to his inclination, he expressed a brief but cheerful acquiescence, and the worthy couple entered the house together. As soon as they were seated in the parlour, Jessie placed on the table some excellent corn-cakes and cheese, together with the before-mentioned cognac, and busied herself with even more than her wonted alacrity, to offer these good things to the father of the youth towards whom she entertained, as we have said, a secret but very decided partiality. She carried her hospitality so far as to bring a bottle of old madeira from David's favourite corner in the cellar, which she decanted with great dexterity, and placed before the mate. The jolly tar complimented the merchant, after his own blunt fashion, both on the excellence of his liquor, and the attractions of his daughter, saying, in reference to the latter, "I can tell you, Master Muir, that I hold Jessie to be as handsome and as handy a lass as any in the territory. If I were twenty years younger, I should be very apt to clap on all sail, and try to make a prize of her!"

At this moment his son entered from the store, under the pretext of speaking to David about the sale of some goods, but with the object of being for a few minutes near to Jessie. He had never spoken to her of love, being afraid that his suit would certainly be rejected by her parents, who, from their reputed wealth, would doubtless expect to marry their daughter to one of the principal personages in the commonwealth of Marietta. As he entered, his eyes encountered those of Jessie, who was still blushing from the effect of the compliment paid to her by his father.

"Harry, my boy," shouted the mate, "you are just come in time; I have filled a glass of David's prime 84, and you must give me a toast! Now, my lad, speak up; heave a-head!"

"Father, I am ashamed of you!" replied the youth, colouring. "How can you ask for another toast when Miss Jessie's standing at your elbow?"

"The boy's right," said the sailor, "and he shall drink it, too; shan't he David?"

"I'm thinking y'll no need to ask him twice. Jessie, hand the lad a glass!"

At her father's bidding she brought another glass from the cupboard; and in giving it to young Gregson, one or other of them was so awkward, that instead of it he took her hand in his; and although he relinquished it immediately, there was a pressure, unconscious perhaps, but so distinctly perceptible to Jessie, that she blushed still deeper, and felt almost relieved by hearing her name called from the store in the loudest key of her mother's shrill voice, while it was repeated yet more loudly by the honest mate, who gave the toast as she left the room, "Here's Jessie Muir,—a long life and a happy one to her!"

Henry Gregson drank the madeira, but he scarcely knew whether it was sweet or sour, for his blood still danced with the touch of Jessie's hand; and setting down the glass, he returned abruptly to the store, whether in the hope of stealing another look at her, or to enjoy his own reflections on the last few minutes, the reader may determine for himself.

The mate and the merchant continued their sitting until the bottle of madeira was empty, and the flask of cogniac was considerably diminished; and although their conversation was doubtless highly interesting, and worthy of being listened to with the greatest attention, yet, as it did not bear immediately upon the events of our narrative, we will leave it unrecorded, among the many other valuable treasures of a similar kind, which are suffered day by day to sink into oblivion.

M. Perrot being now fairly under way, and having taken with him all the articles required by Reginald for his Indian expedition, our hero resolved no longer to delay his own departure, being about to encounter a very tedious land journey before he could reach St. Louis, and being also desirous of performing it by easy marches, in order that Nekimi might arrive at the Osage hunting-camp fresh, and ready for any of those emergencies in which success might depend upon his strength and swiftness. Baptiste was now quite in his element; and an early day being fixed for their departure, he packed the few clothes and provisions which they were likely to require on the journey, in two capacious leather bags, which were to be slung across the rough hardy nag which had accompanied him on more than one distant expedition and he was soon able to announce to Reginald that he was ready to start at an hour's notice

The parting of our hero from his family was somewhat trying to his firmness; for poor Lucy whose nerves were much affected by her own

sorrows, could not control her grief; Aunt Mary also shed tears, while, mingled with her repeated blessings and excellent counsel, she gave him several infallible recipes for the cure of cuts, bruises, and the bite of rattle-snakes. The Colonel squeezed his hand with concealed emotion, and bade him remember those whom he left behind, and not incur any foolish risk in the pursuit of amusement, or in the excitement of Indian adventure. But it was in parting with his mother that his feelings underwent the severest trial, for her health had long been gradually declining; and although she evinced the resigned composure which marked her gentle uncomplaining character, there was a deep solemnity in her farewell benediction, arising from a presentiment that they might not meet again on this side of the grave. It required all the beauty of the scenery through which he passed, and all the constitutional buoyancy of his spirits, to enable Reginald to shake off the sadness which crept over him, when he caught from a rising ground the last glimpse of Mooshanne; but the fresh elasticity of youth ere long prevailed, and he ran his fingers through the glossy mane that hung over Nekimi's arching crest, anticipating with pleasure the wild adventures by flood and field that they would share together.

Reginald wore the deer-skin hunting-suit that we have before described; his rifle he had sent with the canoe, the bugle was slung across his shoulders, a brace of horse-pistols were in the holsters, and a hunting knife hanging at his girdle completed his equipment. The sturdy guide was more heavily armed; for besides his long rifle, which he never quitted, a knife hung on one side of his belt, and at the other was slung the huge axe which had procured him the name by which he was known among some of the tribes; but in spite of these accoutrements, and of the saddle-bags before-mentioned, his hardy nag paced along with an enduring vigour that would hardly have been expected from one of so coarse and unpromising an exterior; sometimes their way lay through the vast prairies which were still found in the states Indiana and Illinois; at others among dense woods and rich valleys, through which flowed the various tributaries that swell Ohio's mighty stream, the guide losing no opportunity of explaining to Reginald as they went, all the signs and secret indications of Indian or border woodcraft that occurred. They met with abundance of deer, and at night they made their fire; and having finished their venison supper, camped under the shelter of some ancient oak or sycamore. Thus Reginald's hardy frame became on this preliminary journey more inured to the exposure that he would have to undergo among the Osages and Delawares of the Far-west; they fell in now and then with straggling bands of hunters and of friendly Indians, but with no adventures worthy of record; and thus, after a steady march of twenty days, they reached the banks of the Mississippi, and crossed in the ferry to St. Louis.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Escape of Ethelston from Guadaloupe, and the Consequences which ensued from that Expedition.

We left *Ethelston on the deck of* the little schooner, which was bearing him rapidly from the shores of Guadaloupe, under the influence of an easterly wind, so strong that all his attention was absorbed in the management of the vessel. During the night the gale increased, and blew with unabated violence for forty-eight hours. "The Sea-gull," for so she was called, scudded lightly before it; and on the third day Ethelston had made by his log upwards of five hundred miles of westerly course.

Having only two hands on board, and the weather being so uncommonly boisterous, he had been kept in constant employment, and had only been able to snatch a few brief intervals for sleep and refreshment; he found Jacques the coxswain an active able seaman, but extremely silent and reserved, obeying exactly the orders he received, but scarcely uttering a word even to Cupid; it was he alone who attended upon the invalid and the nurse in the after cabin; and the weather having now moderated, Ethelston asked how the youth had borne the pitching and tossing of the vessel during the late gale. Jacques replied, that he was not worse, and seemed not to suffer from the sea. The captain was satisfied, and retired to his cabin; he had not been there long, before Cupid entered; and carefully shutting the door behind him, stood before his master with a peculiar expression of countenance, which the latter well knew to intimate some unexpected intelligence.

"Well, Cupid, what is it?" said Ethelston, "is there a suspicious sail in sight?"

"Very suspicious, Massa Ethelston," replied the Black, grinning and lowering his voice to a whisper, "and suspicious goods aboard the schooner."

"What do you mean, Cupid?"

"There is some trick aboard. I not like that Jacques that never speak, and I not like that sick boy and his nurse, that nobody never see."

"But why should you be angry, Cupid, with the poor boy because he is sick? I have promised to deliver him safe to his friends at New Orleans, and I hope soon, with this breeze, to perform my promise."

"Massa Ethelston, I believe it all one damn trick—I not believe there is one sick boy; when Jacques come in and go out of that cabin he creep, and look, and listen, and watch like the Colonel's grey cat at the cheese cupboard; Cupid no pretend to much learnin', but he no be made fool of by damn French nigger, and he no tell Massa Ethelston a lie." So saying, the African withdrew as quietly as he had entered.

After musing some time on his follower's communication and suspicions, he resolved to unravel whatever mystery might be attached to the matter, by visiting the invalid immediately. On his knocking gently at the door for admission, he was answered from within by the nurse that her patient was asleep, and ought not now to be disturbed; but being determined not to allow another day to pass in uncertainty, he went on deck, and summoning Jacques, told him to go down presently and inform the nurse that in the evening, as soon as her patient was awake, he should pay him a visit.

Jacques received this mandate with some confusion, and began to stammer something about the "poor boy not being disturbed."

"Harkee, sir," said Ethelston sternly; "I am captain on board this craft, and will be obeyed; as you go into that cabin three or four times a day to attend upon the invalid, methinks my

presence cannot be so dangerous. I will take the risk upon myself: you hear my orders, sir, and they are not to be trifled with!"

Jacques disappeared, and Ethelston remained pacing the deck. In about half an hour the latter came up to him, and said, "The young gentleman will receive the captain at sundown."

"Very well," replied Ethelston, and continued to pace the deck, revolving in his mind all the strange events of the last month,—his illness, the unfortunate passion of Nina, and her strange behaviour when he bade her farewell.

At the appointed time he went down, and again knocked at the side cabin door for admission; it was opened by the nurse, apparently a young woman of colour, who whispered to him in French, "Go in, sir, and speak gently to him, for he is very delicate." So saying she left the cabin, and closed the door behind her.

Ethelston approached the sofa, on which the grey evening light permitted him to see a slight figure, covered with a mantle; and addressing the invalid kindly, he said, "I fear, young sir, you must have suffered much during the gale."

"No, I thank you," was the reply, but so faintly uttered as to be scarcely audible.

"Can I do anything to make your stay on board more comfortable?"

"Yes," was the whispered answer.

"Then tell me what, or how; as I have promised to do all in my power to make the voyage agreeable to you."

After a pause of a minute, during which the invalid seemed struggling with repressed emotion, the mantle was suddenly thrown aside, the recumbent figure sprang from the sofa, and Nina stood before him! "Yes," she said, "you *have* promised—and my ears drank in the promise—for it, and for you I have abandoned home, country, kindred,—what do I say,—I have abandoned nothing; for you are to me home, kindred, country, everything! Dear, dear Ethelston! this moment repays me for all I have suffered." As she spoke thus, she threw her arms round his neck, and hid her blushing face upon his breast.

Ethelston was so completely taken by surprise, that for a moment he could not utter a syllable. Mistaking his silence for a full participation in her own impassioned feelings, and looking up in his face, her eyes beaming with undisguised affection, and her dark tresses falling carelessly over her beautiful neck, she continued, "Oh speak—speak one gentle word,—nay, rather break not this delicious silence, and let me dream here for ever."

If Ethelston was for a moment stupified, partly by surprise and partly by the effect of her surpassing loveliness, it was *but* for a moment. His virtue, pride, and honour were aroused, and the suggestions of passion found no entrance to his heart. Firmly, but quietly replacing her on the sofa she had quitted, he said, in a voice more stern than he had ever before used when addressing her, "Nina, you have grieved me more than I can express; you have persisted in seeking a heart which I frankly told you was not mine to give; I see no longer in you the Nina whom I first knew in Guadaloupe, gentle, affectionate, and docile—but a wild, headstrong girl, pursuing a wayward fancy, regardless of truth, and of that maidenly reserve, which is woman's sweetest charm. Not only have you thus hurt my feelings, but you have brought a stain *upon my honour,—nay,* interrupt me not," he *added, seeing that she was about to* speak; "for I must tell you the truth, and you must learn to bear it, even though it may sound harsh to your ears. I repeat, you have brought a stain upon my honour,—for what will your respected father think of the man whom he received wounded, suffering, and a prisoner? whom he cherished with hospitable kindness, and who now requites all his benefits by stealing from his roof the daughter of his love, the ornament and blessing of his home? Nina, I did not think that you would bring this disgrace and humiliation upon my name! I have now a sacred and a painful duty before me, and I will see you no more until I have restored you to the arms of an offended father. I hope he will forgive you, as I do, for the wrong that you have done to both of us. Farewell, Nina." With these words, spoken in a voice trembling with contending emotions, he turned and left the cabin.

Reader, have you ever dwelt in Sicily, or in any other southern island of volcanic formation? If so, you may have seen a verdant spot near the base of the mountain, where the flowers and the herbage were smiling in the fresh beauty of summer, where the luxuriant vine mingled her tendrils with the spreading branches of the elm, where the air was loaded with fragrance, and the ear was refreshed by the hum of bees and the murmur of a rippling stream,—on a sudden, the slumbering mountain-furnace is aroused —the sulphurous crater pours forth its fiery deluge, and in a moment the spot so lately teeming with life, fertility, and fragrance, is become the arid, barren abode of desolation. If, reader, you have seen this fearful change on the face of nature, or if you can place it vividly before your imagination, then may you conceive the state of Nina's mind, when her long-cherished love was thus abruptly and finally rejected by the man for whom she had sacrificed her home, her parents, and her pride! It is impossible for language to portray an agony such as that by which all the faculties of her soul and body seemed absorbed and benumbed; she neither spoke, nor wept, nor gave any outward sign of suffering, but with bloodless and silent lips, sat gazing on vacancy.

Fanchette returned, and looked on her young mistress with fear and dread. She could neither elicit a word in reply, nor the slightest indication of her repeated entreaties being understood. Nina suffered her hands to be chafed, her temples to be bathed, and at length broke into a loud hysteric laugh, that rang through the adjoining cabin, and sent a thrill to the heart of Ethelston Springing on deck, he ordered Jacques to go below, and aid Fanchette in attending on her young lady, and then, with folded arms, he leaned over the low bulwark, and sat meditating in deep silence on the events of the day.

The moon had risen, and her beams silvered the waves through which the schooner was cutting her way; scarcely a fleeting cloud obscured the brightness of the sky, and all nature seemed hushed in the calm and peaceful repose of night. How different from the fearful storm now raging in the bosom of the young girl from whom he was divided only by a few inches of plank! He shuddered when that thought arose, but his conscience told him that he was acting aright, and indulging in the reverie that possessed him, he saw a distant figure in the glimmering moonlight which, as it drew near, grew more and more distinct, till it wore the form, the features, and the approving smile of his Lucy! Confirmed and

strengthened in his resolutions, he started from his seat, and bade the astonished Cupid, who was now at the helm, to prepare to go about, and stand to the eastward; Jacques was called from below, the order was repeated in a sterner voice, the sails were trimmed, and in a few minutes the schooner was close hauled and laying her course, as near as the wind would permit, for Guadaloupe.

While these events were passing on board the Seagull, Captain L'Estrange had returned in the frigate to Point à Pitre. His grief and anger may be better imagined than described when he learned the flight of his daughter and of his prisoner, together with the loss of his yacht and two of his slaves.

Concluding that the fugitives would make for New Orleans, he dispatched the Hirondelle immediately in pursuit, with orders to discover them if possible, and to bring them back by stratagem or force. He also wrote to Colonel Brandon, painting in the blackest colours the treachery and ingratitude of Ethelston, and calling upon him, as a man of honour, to disown and punish the perpetrator of such an outrage on the laws of hospitality.

Meanwhile the latter was straining every nerve to reach again the island from which he had so lately escaped. In this object he was hindered, not only by baffling winds, but by the obstinacy of Jacques, who, justly fearing the wrath of his late master, practised every manœuvre to frustrate Ethelston's design. But the latter was on his guard; and unless he was himself on deck, never trusted the helm in the coxswain's hands.

He learned from Fanchette, that Nina was in a high fever and quite delirious; but though he enquired constantly after her, and ordered every attention to be paid to her that was within his power, he adhered firmly to the resolution that he had formed of never entering her cabin.

After a few days' sailing to the eastward, when Ethelston calculated that he should not now be at a great distance from Guadaloupe, he fell in with a vessel, which proved to be the Hirondelle. The Seagull was immediately recognised; and the weather being fair, the lieutenant and eight men came on board. The French officer was no sooner on the deck, than he ordered his men to seize and secure Ethelston, and to place the two blacks in irons.

It was in vain that Ethelston indignantly remonstrated against such harsh and undeserved treatment. The officer would listen to no explanation; and without deigning a reply, ordered his men to carry their prisoners on board the Hirondelle.

On reaching Point à Pitre, they were all placed in separate places of confinement; and Nina was, not without much risk and difficulty, conveyed to her former apartment in her father's house. The delirium of fever seemed to have permanently affected the poor girl's brain. She sang wild snatches of songs, and told those about her that her lover was often with her, but that he was invisible. Sometimes she fancied herself on board a ship, and asked them which way the wind blew, and whether they were near the shore. Then she would ask for a guitar, and tell them that she was a mermaid, and would sing them songs that the fishes loved to hear.

The distracted father often sat and listened to these incoherent ravings, until he left the room in an agony not to be described; and when alone, vented the most *fearful imprecations* on the supposed treachery and ingratitude of Ethelston. He could not bring himself to see the latter; for, said he, "I must kill him, if I set eyes on his hateful person:" but he one day wrote the following lines, which he desired to be delivered to his prisoner:

"A FATHER, whose indignation is yet greater than his agony, desires to know what plea you can urge in extenuation of the odious crimes laid to your charge:—the deliberate theft of his slaves and yacht, and the abduction and ruin of his child, in recompense for misplaced trust, kindness, and hospitality?"

Poor Ethelston, in the gloomy solitude of the narrow chamber where he was confined, read and re-read the above lines many times before he would trust himself to reply to them. He felt for the misery of L'Estrange, and he was too proud and too generous to exculpate himself by the narration of Nina's conduct; nay, although he knew that by desiring L'Estrange to examine separately Fanchette and Jacques, his own innocence, and the deceit practised upon him, would be brought to light, he could not bring himself to forget that delicacy which Nina had herself forgotten; nor add, to clear himself, one mite to the heavy weight of visitation that had already fallen upon her. He contented himself with sending the following answer:

"SIR,

"Your words, though harsh, would be more than merited by the crimes of which you believe me guilty. There is a Being above, who reads the heart, and will judge the conduct of us all. If I am guilty of the crimes imputed to me, His vengeance will inflict on me, through the stings of conscience, punishment more terrible even than the wrath of a justly-offended father could desire for the destroyer of his child. If I am not guilty, He, in His own good time, will make it known, and will add to your other heavy sorrows, regret for having unjustly charged with such base ingratitude,

"Your servant and prisoner,

"E. ETHELSTON."

On receiving the above letter, which seemed dictated by a calm consciousness of rectitude, L'Estrange's belief of his prisoner's guilt was for a moment staggered; and had he bethought himself of cross-examining the other partners in the escape, he would doubtless have arrived at the truth; but his feelings were too violently excited to permit the exercise of his reason; and tearing the note to pieces, he stamped upon it, exclaiming, in a paroxysm of rage, "Dissembling hypocrite! does he think to cozen me with words, as he has poisoned poor Nina's peace?"

Her disorder now assumed a different character. The excitement of delirium ceased, and was succeeded by a feebleness and gradual wasting, which baffled all the resources of medicine; and such was the apathy and stupor that clouded her faculties, that even her father could scarcely tell whether she knew him or not. In this state she continued for several days; and the physician at length informed L'Estrange that he must prepare himself for the worst, and that all hope of recovery was gone.

Madame L'Estrange had, under the pressure of anxiety, forgotten her habitual listlessness, and watched by her daughter's couch with a mother's unwearied solicitude; on the night succeeding the above sad announcement, Nina sunk into a quiet sleep, which gave some hope to her

sanguine parents, and induced them also to permit themselves a few hours' repose.

In the morning she awoke; her eye no longer dwelt on vacancy; a slight flush was visible on her transparent cheek, and she called her father, in a voice feeble, indeed, but clear and distinct. Who shall paint the rapture with which he hailed the returning dawn of reason and of hope? But his joy was of brief duration; for Nina, beckoning him to approach yet nearer, said, "God be thanked that I may yet beg your blessing and forgiveness, dearest father!" Then, pressing her wasted hand upon her brow, she continued, after a short pause, "Yes, I remember it all now—all; the orange-grove—the flight—the ship—the last meeting! Oh! tell me, where is he? where is Ethelston?"

"He is safe confined," answered L'Estrange, scarcely repressing his rage; "he shall not escape punishment. The villain shall yet know the weight of an injured father's—" Ere he could conclude the sentence, Nina, by a sudden exertion, half rose in her bed, and, grasping his arm convulsively, said, "Father, curse him not—you know not what you say; it is on me, on me alone, that all your anger should fall; listen, and speak not, for my hours are numbered, and my strength nearly spent." She then proceeded to tell him, in a faint but distinct voice, all the particulars already known to the reader, keeping back nothing in her own defence, and confessing how Ethelston had been deceived, and how she had madly persisted in her endeavours to win his love, after he had explicitly owned to her that his heart and hand were promised to another.

"I solemnly assure you," she said, in conclusion, "that he never spoke to me of love, that he warned me as a brother, and reproved me as a father; but I would not be counselled. His image filled my thoughts, my senses, my whole soul—it fills them yet; and if you wish your poor Nina to die in peace, let her see you embrace him as a friend and son." So saying she sank exhausted on her pillow.

L'Estrange could scarcely master the agitation excited by this narration. After a short pause he replied, "My poor child! I fear you dream again. I wrote only a few days ago to Ethelston, charging him with his villany, and asking what he could say in his defence? His reply was nothing but a canting subterfuge."

"What was it?" inquired Nina, faintly.

L'Estrange repeated the words of the note. As he did so, a sweet smile stole over her countenance, and, clasping her hands together, she exclaimed, "Like himself—noble, generous Ethelston! Father, you are blind; he would not exculpate himself, by proclaiming your daughter's shame! If you doubt me, question Fanchette—Jacques—who know it all too well; but you will not doubt me, dear, dear father! By that Being to whose presence I am fast hastening, I tell you only the truth; by His name I conjure you to comfort my last moments, by granting my last request!"

L'Estrange averted his face, and rising almost immediately, desired an attendant to summon Ethelston without delay.

A long pause ensued; Nina's lips moved as if in silent prayer; and her father, covering his face with his hands, struggled to control the anguish by which his firmness was all but overpowered. At length Ethelston entered the room; he had been informed that Nina was very ill, but was by no means aware of the extremity of her danger. Naturally indignant at the treatment he had lately received, knowing it to be undeserved, and ignorant of the purpose for which he was now called, his manner was cold and somewhat haughty, as he inquired the commands which Captain L'Estrange might have for his prisoner.

The agonized father sought in vain for utterance; his only reply was to point to the almost lifeless form of his child.

One glance from the bed to the countenance of L'Estrange was sufficient to explain all to Ethelston, who sprang forward, and, wringing the old captain's hand, faltered, in a voice of deep emotion, "Oh! forgive me for so speaking; I knew nothing—nothing of this dreadful scene!" Then, turning from him, he fixed his eyes upon Nina, while the convulsive working of his features showed that his habitual self-command was scarcely equal to support the present unexpected trial.

The deadly paleness of her brow contrasted with the disordered tresses of her dark hair—the long eyelashes, reposing upon the transparent cheek, which wore a momentary hectic glow—the colourless lip, and the thin, wan fingers, crossed meekly upon her breast—all gave to her form and features an air of such unearthly beauty that Ethelston almost doubted whether the spirit still lingered in its lovely mansion; but his doubts were soon resolved, for, having finished the unuttered but fervent prayer which she had been addressing to the Throne of Grace, she again unclosed her eyes, and when they rested upon his countenance, a sweet smile played round her lip, and a warmer flush came over her cheek. Extending her hand to him, she said "Can you forgive me for all the wrong I have done you?"

In reply, he pressed her fingers to his lips, for he could not speak. She continued: "I know that I grievously wronged my parents; but the wrong which I did to you was yet more cruel. God be thanked for giving me this brief but precious hour for atonement. You more than once called me your sister and your friend! be a brother to me now. And you, dearest father, if your love outweighs my fault,—if you wish your child to die happy, embrace him for my sake, and repair the injustice that you have done to his generous nature!"

The two men looked at each other; their hearts were melted, and their cordial embrace brought a ray of gladness to Nina's eyes. "God be thanked!" she murmured faintly. "Let my mother now come, that I may receive her blessing too."

While L'Estrange went to summon his wife to a scene which the weakness of her mind and nerves rendered her unequal to support, Nina continued: "Dear, dear Ethelston, let me hear your voice; the madness, the passion, the jealousy, that filled my bosom are all past, but the love is there, imperishable; tell me, my friend, counsellor, brother, that you are not angry with me for saying so now."

Again the wasted fingers were pressed to his burning lip; his tongue could not yet find utterance, but a tear which fell upon them told to the sufferer that there was no indifference in that silence.

Captain L'Estrange now entered, accompanied by his wife. Although a weak and foolish woman, her heart was not dead to those nat

ural affections of a mother which the present scene might be expected to call forth; she wept long and violently over her dying child, and perhaps her grief might be embittered by a whisper of conscience that her sufferings were more or less attributable to neglected education. Fearing that her mother's excessive agitation might exhaust Nina's scanty store of remaining strength, Ethelston suggested to Captain L'Estrange to withdraw her into the adjoining apartment; and, approaching the sufferer, he whispered a few words in her ear. A sweet smile played upon her countenance as she answered, "Yes, and without delay."

Following her retiring parents from the room, he motioned to the priest, who was waiting at the door, to enter; and the sad party remained together while the confessor performed the rites of his sacred office. Madame L'Estrange was so overpowered by her grief, that she was removed, almost insensible, to her own apartment, while, upon a signal from the holy man, Ethelston and the father re-entered that of Nina.

Addressing the latter, she said in a faint voice, "Dearest father, I have made my peace with Heaven; let me add one more prayer to you for peace and forgiveness on earth."

"Speak it, my child; it is already granted," said the softened veteran.

"Pardon, for my sake, Fanchette and Jacques: they have committed a great offence; but it was I who urged them to it."

"It is forgiven: and they shall not be punished," replied L'Estrange: while Ethelston, deeply touched by this amiable remembrance of the offending slaves at such a moment, whispered to her in a low voice,

"Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God!"

A grateful pressure of the hand which he had placed in hers, was the only reply, as she continued, addressing L'Estrange, "And let them marry, father, I know they love each other; and those who love should marry." Here her voice became feebler and feebler, as, once more opening her dark eyes, which shone with preternatural lustre upon Ethelston, she added, "You, too, will marry; but none will ever love you like your . . . sister!—closer—closer yet! let me feel your breath. Father, join your hand to his—so! This death is - - Par - - -"

The closing word died upon her lips; but the angelic smile that lingered there seemed to emanate from that Paradise which their last moments strove in vain to name. Her earthly sorrows were at rest, and the bereaved father fell exhausted into Ethelston's arms.

CHAPTER XVII.

Excursion on the Prairie.—The Party fall in with a veteran Hunter.

We must now return to Reginald and his trusty follower, Baptiste, whom we left at St. Louis, where they were busily employed in disposing of Colonel Brandon's share of the peltries brought in by the trapping party, which he had partly furnished the preceding year. They did not find much difficulty in effecting an advantageous sale to two of the other partners in the expedition,—active, enterprising men, who, from their connection with the Mackinaw Fur Company, *were sure of reselling* at considerable profit.

As soon as these affairs were settled, Reginald, who had been joined by Perrot, Bearskin, and the remaining crew of the canoe, resolved to defer no longer his proposed journey into the Osage country. He left all the arrangements to Baptiste and Bearskin, under whose superintendence the preparations advanced so rapidly, that at the end of a week they were satisfactorily completed.

It had been determined to leave the canoe at St. Louis, and to perform the journey by land; for this purpose a strong saddle-horse was purchased for each of the party, together with six pack-horses, and as many mules, for the transfer of the ammunition, baggage, and presents for their Indian allies. Four additional Canadian "coureurs des Bois" were engaged to take charge of the packs; so that when they started for the Western Prairies, the party mustered twelve in number, whose rank and designation were as follows:—

Reginald Brandon; Baptiste, his lieutenant, Bearskin, who, in the absence of the two former, was to take the command; M. Perrot, Mike Smith, with three other border hunters, and the four Canadians, completed the party.

Baptiste had taken care to place among the packages an abundance of mirrors, cutlery, and other articles most highly prized by the savages. He had also selected the horses with the greatest care, and two spare ones were taken, in case of accidents by the way. When all was ready, even the taciturn Bearskin admitted that he had never seen a party so well fitted out, in every respect, for an Indian expedition.

It was a lovely morning when they left St. Louis, and entered upon the broad track which led through the deep Missourian forest, with occasional openings of prairie, towards a trading post lately opened on the Osage, a river which runs from S.W. to N.E. and falls into the Missouri. Of all the party, none were in such exuberant spirits as Perrot, who, mounted on an active, spirited little Mestang horse,* capering beside the bulky figure of Mike Smith, addressed to him various pleasantries in broken English, which the other, if he understood them, did not deign to notice.

It was now near the close of May, and both the prairie and the woodland scenery were clad in the beautiful and varied colours of early summer; the grassy road along which they wound their easy way was soft and elastic to the horses' hoofs; and as they travelled farther from the settlements scattered near St. Louis, the frequent tracks of deer which they observed, tempted Reginald to halt his party, and encamp for the night, while he and Baptiste sallied forth to provide for them a venison supper.

After a short hunting ramble they returned, bearing with them the saddle of a fine buck. A huge fire was lighted; the camp-kettles, and other cooking utensils were in immediate request, and the travellers sat down to enjoy their first supper in the Missourian wilderness.

Monsieur Perrot was now quite in his element, and became at once a universal favourite, for never had any of the party tasted coffee or flour-cakes so good, or venison steaks of so delicate a flavour. His good humour was as inexhaustible as his inventive culinary talent; and they were almost disposed to believe in his

* Mestang, a horse bred between the wild and the tame breeds; they are sometimes to be met with among the traders to Santa Fé.

boasting assurance, that so long as there was a buffalo-hide, or an old moccasin left among them, they should never want a good meal.

Having supped and smoked a comfortable pipe, they proceeded to bivouac for the night. By the advice of Baptiste, Reginald had determined to accustom his party, from the first, to those precautionary habits which might soon become so essential to their safety; a regular rotation of sentry duty was established, the horses were carefully secured, and every man lay down with his knife in his belt, and his loaded rifle at his side; the packs were all carefully piled, so as to form a low breastwork, from behind which they might fire, in case of sudden attack; and when these dispositions were completed, those who were not on the watch wrapped themselves in their blankets or buffalo-skins, and with their feet towards the fire, slept as comfortably as on a bed of down.

For two days they continued their march in a northwest direction, meeting with no incident worthy of record; the hunters found abundance of game of every description, and Monsieur Perrot's skill was daily exercised upon prairie-hens, turkeys, and deer. On the third day, as they were winding their way leisurely down a wooded valley, the sharp crack of a rifle was heard at no great distance. Reginald, desiring to ascertain whether Indians or white men were hunting in the neighbourhood, halted his party, and went forward, accompanied by Baptiste, to endeavour, unperceived, to approach the person whose shot they had heard. A smooth, grassy glade facilitated their project, and a slight column of smoke curling up from an adjoining thicket, served to guide them towards the spot. Ere they had advanced far, the parting of the brushwood showed them that the object of their search was approaching the place where they stood, and they had barely time to conceal themselves in a bush of sumach, when the unknown hunter emerged from the thicket, dragging after him a fine deer. He was a powerful man of middling height, not very unlike Baptiste in dress and appearance, but even more embrowned and weather-beaten than the trusty guide; he seemed to be about fifty years of age, and the hair on his temples was scant and grey; his countenance was strikingly expressive of boldness and resolution, and his eye seemed as clear and bright as that of a man in the early prime of life. Leaning his rifle against an adjoining tree, he proceeded to handle and feel his quarry, to ascertain the proportions of fat and meat; the examination seemed not unsatisfactory, for when it was concluded he wiped the perspiration from his brow, and with a complacent smile muttered half aloud, "Ah, 'taint every day as a man can find a saddle like that in old Kentuck now—what with their dogs, and girdlins, and clearins, and hog-feedings, and the other devilments of the settlements, the deer's all driven out of the country, or if it aint driven out, they run all the fat off, so that it's only fit to feed one of your tradin' townbred fellows, who wouldn't know a prime buck from a Lancaster sheep!"

After this brief soliloquy, the veteran sportsman tucked up the sleeve of his hunting-shirt, and proceeded to skin and cut up his quarry, with a skill and despatch that showed him to be a perfect master of his craft. Reginald and Baptiste had remained silent observers of his proceedings, but the former inferred from the pleased twinkle of the Guide's grey eyes, and the comic working of the muscles of his mouth, that the solitary hunter was no stranger to him; touching Baptiste lightly, he whispered, "I see that we have come across an acquaintance of yours in this remote place."

"That we have, Master Reginald," said the Guide; "and you'd have known him too, if you'd spent some of the years in Kentuck, as you passed at those colleges in the old country but we'll just step out and hail him, for though he aint particular fond of company, he s not the man to turn his back on a friend to whom he has once given his hand."

So saying, he rose from his hiding place, and coming out on the open glade, before Reginald could inquire the stranger's name, the Guide said aloud, "A prime buck, Colonel, I see your hand's as steady as ever!"

At the first sound of a voice addressing him in his own language, a shade of displeasure came across the hunter's countenance, but as he recognised the speaker, it disappeared instantly, and he replied, "Ha! Baptiste, my old friend, is that you? What chase are you on here?"

So saying, he grasped the horny hand of the Guide, with a heartiness which proved that the latter was really welcome.

"Why, Colonel, I'm out on a kind o' mixed hunt this turn, with this young gentleman, whose father, Colonel Brandon, you've known many a day. Master Reginald, I'm sure you'll be glad to be acquainted with Colonel Boone, howbeit you little expected to find him in this part of the airth."

At the mention of the stranger's name, Reginald's hand was raised unconsciously to his cap, which he doffed respectfully as he said, "I am indeed glad to meet the celebrated Daniel Boone, whose name is as familiar to every western hunter as that of Washington or Franklin in our cities."

"My young friend," said the Colonel, laughing good-humouredly, "I am heartily glad to see your father's son, but you must not bring the ways of the city into the woods, by flattering a rough old bear-hunter with fine words."

"Nay," said Reginald, "there is no flattery, for Baptiste here has spoken of you to me a hundred times, and has told me, as often, that a better hunter, or a better man does not breathe. You seem to have known him some time, and must, therefore, be able to judge whether he is of a flattering sort or not."

"Why, it wasn't much his trade, I allow," replied the Colonel, "in old times when he and I hunted bear for three weeks together in the big laurel thicket at Kentucky Forks. I believe, Baptiste, that axe at your belt is the very one with which you killed the old she, who wasn't pleased because we shot down two of her cubs; she hadn't manners enough to give us time to load again, and when you split her skull handsomely, she was playing a mighty unpleasant game with the stock of my rifle. Ah, that was a reasonable quiet country in those days," continued the Colonel; "we had no trouble, but a lively bit of a skrimmage, now and then, with the Indians, until the Browns, and Frasers, and Micklehams, and heaven knows how many more came to settle in it, and what with their infernal ploughs, and fences, and mills, the . untin was clean spoilt; I stayed as long as I could, for I'd a kind o' likin' to it; but at last I couldn't go ten mile any way without comin' to some clearin' or log-hut, so says I to myself,' Colonel, the sooner

you clear out o' this, the better you'll be pleased.'"

"Well, Colonel," said the Guide, "I heard you had moved away from the Forks, and had gone further down west, but they never told me you had crossed the big river."

"I only came here last fall," replied the Colonel · "for I found in Kentucky that as fast as I moved, the settlers and squatters followed; so I thought I'd dodge 'em once for all, and make for a country where the deer and I could live comfortably together."

"As we have thus accidentally fallen in with you," said Reginald, "I hope you will take a hunter's meal with us before we part; our men and baggage are not a mile from this spot, and Colonel Boone's company will be a pleasure to us all."

The invitation was accepted as frankly as it was given.

Baptiste shouldered the Colonel's venison, and in a short time the three rejoined Reginald's party. Daniel Boone's name alone was sufficient in the West to ensure him a hearty welcome. Perrot's talents were put into immediate requisition, and ere long the game and poultry of the prairie were roasting before a capital fire, while the indefatigable Frenchman prepared the additional and unusual luxuries of hot maize cakes and coffee.

During the repast, Reginald learned from Colonel Boone that various parties of Indians had been lately hunting in the neighbourhood. He described most of them as friendly, and willing to trade in meat or skins for powder and lead; he believed them to belong to the Konsas, a tribe once powerful, and resident on the river called by that name falling into the Missouri, about a hundred miles to the N.W. of the place where our party were now seated; but the tribe had been of late reduced by the ravages of the small-pox, and by the incursions of the Pawnees—a nation more numerous and warlike, whose villages were situated a hundred miles higher up the same river.*

The Colonel described the neighbourhood as abounding in elk, deer, bear, and turkeys; but he said that the beaver and buffalo were already scarce, the great demand for their skins having caused them to be hunted quite out of the region bordering on the settlements. After spending a couple of hours agreeably with our party, the veteran sportsman shouldered his trusty rifle, and wishing our hero a successful hunt, and shaking his old comrade Baptiste cordially by the hand, walked off leisurely in a northerly direction, towards his present abode; which was not, he said, so far distant but that he should easily reach it before sundown.

As the last glimpse of his retiring figure was lost in the shades of the forest, the Guide uttered one of those grunts which he sometimes unconsciously indulged. Reginald knew that on these occasions there was something on his mind, and guessing that it referred to their departed guest, he said,

"Well, Baptiste, I am really glad to have seen Daniel Boone; and I can truly say, I am not disappointed; he seems to be just the sort of man that I expected to see."

"He is a sort," said the Guide, "that we don't see every day, Master Reginald. Perhaps he ain't much of a talker; an' he don't use to quarrel unless there's a reason for't; but if he's once aggravated, or if his friend's in a scrape, he's rather apt to be dangerous."

"I doubt it not," said Reginald; "there is a quiet look of resolution about him; and, in a difficulty, I would rather have one such man with me than two or three of your violent, noisy brawlers."

As he said this his eye inadvertently rested upon the huge figure of Mike Smith, who was seated at a little distance lazily smoking his pipe, and leaning against a log of fallen timber. The Guide observed the direction of Reginald's eye, and guessed what was passing in his mind. A grave smile stole for a moment over his features; but he made no reply, and in a few minutes, the marching orders being issued, the party resumed their journey.

On the following day they reached a point where the track branched off in two directions; the broader, and more beaten, to the N.W.; the other towards the S.W. The Guide informed them that the former led along by the few scattered settlements, that were already made on the southern side of the Missouri, towards the ferry and trading-post near the mouth of the Konsas river; while the smaller, and less beaten track, led towards the branch of Osage river, on which the united party of Delawares and Osages, whom they sought, were encamped.

Having followed this track for fifty miles, they came to a spot, then known among hunters by the name of the Elk Flats, where the branch of the Osage, called Grand River, is fordable Here they crossed without accident or difficulty, except that M. Perrot's horse missed his footing, and slipped into a deeper part of the stream. The horse swam lustily, and soon reached the opposite bank; but the Frenchman had cast himself off, and now grasped with both hands an old limb of a tree that was imbedded near the middle of the river; he could just touch the ground with his feet, but, being a bad swimmer, he was afraid to let go his hold, for fear of being again swept away by the current, while his rueful countenance, and his cries for assistance, provoked the mirth of all the party.

After enjoying his valet's alarm for a few minutes, Reginald, who had already crossed, entered the river again with Nekimi, and approaching Perrot, desired him to grasp the mane firmly in his hand, and leave the rest to the animal's sagacity, which instruction being obeyed, he was safely brought ashore, and in a short time was laughing louder than the rest at his own fright, and at the ludicrous predicament from which he had been extricated.

The packages were all conveyed across without accident, and the party found themselves encamped in what was then considered a part of the Osage country. Here they were obliged to use greater vigilance in the protection of their camp and of their horses, during the night, as they had not yet smoked the pipe with the chiefs, and were liable to an attack from a party of warriors or horsestealers.

The night passed, however, without any disturbance; and on the following day at noon, they reached a spot which Baptiste recognized as a former camping-place of the Osages, and which he knew to be not distant from their present village. Here his attention was suddenly drawn

* The Pawnee nations have of late years fixed their winter villages on the banks of the Nebraska, or Platte River, many hundred miles to the N.W. of the spot named in the text; but at the date of our narrative they dwelt on the banks of the Konsas, where the ruins of their principal village are still faintly to be *discerned*.

to an adjoining maple, on the bark of which sundry marks were rudely cut, and in a fork of the tree were three arrows, and as many separate bunches of horsehair. He examined all these carefully, and replaced them exactly as he found them; after which he informed Reginald that three braves of the Osages had gone forward during the past night on a war-excursion towards the Konsas, and all these marks were left to inform their followers of their purpose, and the exact path which they intended to pursue. He also advised Reginald to halt his party here, while he went on himself with one of the men to the village, it being contrary to the customs of Indian etiquette for a great man to come among them unannounced.

Reginald adopted his counsel, and the sturdy Guide, accompanied by one of the coureurs des Bois, set out upon his mission, the result of which will appear in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Reginald and his Party reach the Indian Encampment.

THE Guide and his companion pursued their way leisurely along a beaten track, which led them through a well-timbered valley, watered by one of the branches of Grand River, until it emerged upon a rising slope of open prairie. Having gained its summit, they saw at a little distance the Indian encampment stretched along the banks of a rivulet, which, after curving round the base of the hill on which they now stood, found its way to the line of heavy timber that marked the course of the main river. They were soon hailed by a mounted Delaware scout, to whom Baptiste explained the peaceful nature of his mission, and desired to be shown into the presence of the principal chiefs.

As the Guide walked through the scattered lodges of the Delawares, his eye rested on more than one Indian to whom he was well known; but as he was now acting in the capacity of ambassador, it was not consistent with Indian usage that he should speak or be spoken to by others on the way. So well did he know the habits of the people among whom he now found himself, that when he arrived before the lodge of the Great Chief, he passed by War-Eagle and Wingenund, who had come to its entrance on the approach of a stranger, and giving them merely a silent sign of recognition, took the place pointed out to him in the centre of the lodge, by the side of the venerable man who was the head of this emigrant band of the Lenapé; to whom, as the highest proof of their respect and veneration, they had given the name of Tamenund,* by which alone he was now known throughout the nation.

The pipe of welcome having been presented, and been smoked for a few minutes with becoming gravity, Baptiste opened to Tamenund the object of his visit, and informed him that a white warrior and chief, already known to some of the Delawares present, desired to eat, to smoke, and to hunt with them for a season as a brother. To this Tamenund, who had already been informed by War-Eagle of the character and conduct of Reginald, as well as of his promised visit, replied with becoming dignity and hospitality, that the young white chief should be welcome; that his heart was known to be great among the Delawares, and that both he and his people should be held as brothers; at the same time he informed the Guide, that as they were about to move their encampment immediately to a more favourable spot, it might be better for the White Chief to join them on the following morning, when all should be prepared for his reception.

The Guide having acceded to this suggestion, rose to take his leave, and retired with his companion from the village. Before they had gone a mile on their return, they heard behind them the trampling of horses, and Baptiste recognised War-Eagle and Wingenund approaching at full speed, who greeted him cordially, and made many inquiries about Netis and the Lily of Mooshanne.

Having acquired the desired information, it was agreed, that before noon on the following day Reginald should come to the spot where they were now conversing, and that War-Eagle should be there to escort and accompany him to his first meeting with the Delaware and Osage chiefs.

These preliminaries being arranged, the Indians galloped back to the village, and Baptiste returned without accident or interruption to Reginald's camp, where he gave an account of his mission and of the arrangements for the morrow's conference.

Early on the following morning they set forth towards the Indian village. By Baptiste's advice, Reginald attired himself more gaily than usual; his hunting-shirt and leggins of elkskin were ornamented with fringes; the bugle slung across his shoulders was suspended by a green cord adorned with tassels; on his head he wore a forage-cap encircled by a gold band; a brace of silver-mounted pistols were stuck in his belt, and a German boar-knife hung at his side; he had allowed Baptiste to ornament Nekimi's bridle with beads, after the Indian fashion, and the noble animal pranced under his gallant rider as if conscious that he was expected to show his beauty and his mettle. The dress and appearance of Reginald, though fanciful and strange, were rendered striking by the grace and muscular vigour of his frame, as well as by the open, fearless character of his countenance; and the party of Whitemen went gaily forward, confident in the favourable impression which their young leader would make on their Indian allies.

When they reached the spot where Baptiste had, on the preceding day, parted from War-Eagle, they descried two Indians sitting at the root of an old maple-tree, as if awaiting their arrival; a single glance enabled Reginald to recognise them, and springing from his horse, he greeted War-Eagle and Wingenund with affectionate cordiality, and read in the looks of both, though they spoke little, that he was heartily welcome. When they had saluted Baptiste, Re-

* The name of Tamenund is doubtless familiar to all Americans who have taken the slightest interest in the history of the Indian tribes, as well as to that more numerous class who have read the graphic and picturesque descriptions penned by the great American novelist; nevertheless, it may be necessary, for the information of some European readers, to state, that Tamenund was an ancient Lenapé chief, whose traditionary fame is so great in the tribe, that they have from time to time given his name to chiefs, and even to white men, whom they desired especially to honour. At the time of the revolutionary war, so numerous were the traditions and legends respecting this hero, that he was in some quarters established as the patron saint of America, under the name of St. Tammany; and hence arose *the Tammany societies* and Tammany buildings in various *parts of the Union. See Heckewalder's Historical Account of the Indian Nations*, chap. xl., and *The Last of the Mohicans, vol. iii. p. 152, &c*

ginald introduced them in form to the other members of his party, and among the rest, to Monsieur Perrot, who having as yet seen few Indians, and those of the meanest class, was surprised at the noble and dignified appearance of War-Eagle, to whom he doffed his cap with as much respect as if he had been a field-marshal of France.

Having made a short halt, during which the pipe was passed round, and some cakes of Indian corn and honey set before their guests, the party again moved forward, under the guidance of War-Eagle. Leaving the heavy timber in the valley, they ascended the opposite hill, where a magnificent prospect opened upon their view; below them was an undulating prairie of boundless extent, through the middle of which ran a tributary branch of Grand River; behind them lay the verdant mass of forest from which they had lately emerged; the plain in front was dotted with the lodges of the Delawares and the Osages, while scattered groups of Indians, and grazing horses, gave life, animation, and endless variety to the scene.

Halting for a moment on the brow of the hill, War-Eagle pointed out to Reginald the lodge of his father Tamenund, distinguished above the rest by its superior size and elevation, and at the same time showed him at the other extremity of the encampment, a lodge of similar dimensions, which he described as being that of the Osage chief.

"How is he called?" inquired Reginald.

"Mahéga," replied the War-Eagle.

At the mention of this name the Guide uttered one of those peculiar sounds, something between a whistle and a grunt, by which Reginald knew that something was passing in his mind, but on this occasion, without apparently noticing the interruption, he continued, addressing War-Eagle, "Will Mahéga receive me too as a brother—is the Osage chief a friend to the Whitemen?"

"Mahéga is a warrior," replied the Indian; "he hunts with the Lenapé, and he must be a friend of their brother."

Not only did this answer appear evasive, but there was also something more than usually constrained in the tone and manner of War-Eagle, which did not escape the observation of Reginald, and with the straightforward openness of his character, he said, "War-Eagle, my heart is open to you, and my tongue can be silent if required—speak to me freely, and tell me if Mahéga is a friend or not; is he a brave or a snake?"

War-Eagle, fixing his searching eye upon Reginald's countenance, replied, "Mahéga is a warrior—the scalps in his lodge are many—his name is not a lie, but his heart is not that of a Lenapé—War-Eagle will not speak of him:—Grand Hâche knows him, and my brother's eyes will be open."

Having thus spoken, the young chief added a few words in his own tongue to Baptiste, and making a sign for Wingenund to follow, he galloped off at speed towards the encampment.

Reginald, surprised, and somewhat inclined to be displeased by their abrupt departure, turned to the Guide, and inquired the cause of it, and also the meaning of War-Eagle's last words.

Baptiste, shaking his head significantly, replied in a low voice, "I know Mahéga well—at least I have heard much of him, his name signifies 'Red-hand,' and, as the young chief says, it tells no lie, for he has killed many; last year he attacked a war-party of the Outagamies* near the Great River, and cut them off to a man; he himself killed their chief and several of their warriors—they say he is the strongest and the bravest man in the nation."

"It seems to me," said Reginald, "that War Eagle and he are not very good friends."

"They are not," replied Baptiste; "the young Delaware has evidently some quarrel with him, and therefore would not speak of him—we shall learn what it is before many days are over; meanwhile, Master Reginald, say nothing to any others of the party on this subject, for they may take alarm, or show suspicion, and if they do, your summer hunt may chance to end in rougher play than we expect. I will keep my eye on 'Red-hand,' and will soon tell you what tree he's making for."

"Why did they gallop off so abruptly?" inquired Reginald.

"They are gone to rejoin the bands which are coming out to receive us on our entrance," replied the Guide. "We must put our party in their best array, and get the presents ready, for we have not many minutes to spare."

The event proved the correctness of his calculation; for they had scarcely time to select from the packs those articles destined to be presented to the chiefs at this interview, before they saw two large bands of mounted Indians gallop towards them from the opposite extremities of the encampment. As they drew near that which came from the Delaware quarter, and was headed by War-Eagle in person, they checked their speed, and approached slowly, while their leader, advancing in front of the band, saluted Reginald and his party with dignified courtesy. Meanwhile, the body of Osages continued their career with headlong speed, shouting, yelling, and going through all the exciting manœuvres of a mock fight, after their wild fashion. Their dress was more scanty and less ornamented than that of the Delawares; but being tricked out with painted horsehair, porcupine quills, and feathers, it bore altogether a more gay and picturesque appearance; neither can it be denied that they were, in general, better horsemen than their allies; and they seemed to delight in showing off their equestrian skill, especially in galloping up to Reginald's party at the very top of their speed, and then either halting so suddenly as to throw their horses quite back upon their haunches, or dividing off to the right and to the left, and renewing their manœuvres in another quarter with increased extravagance of noise and gesture.

Reginald having learned from Baptiste that this was their mode of showing honour to guests on their arrival, awaited patiently the termination of their manœuvres; and when at length they ceased, and the Osage party reined their horses up by the side of the Delawares, he went forward and shook hands with their leader, a warrior somewhat older than War-Eagle, and of a fine martial appearance. As soon as he found an opportunity, Reginald, turning to Wingenund, who was close behind him, inquired, in English, if that Osage chief was "Mahéga?"

* The tribe called by white men "the Foxes," who inhabit chiefly the region between the Upper Mississippi and Lake Michigan.

"No," replied the youth, "that is a brave,* called in their tongue the Black-Wolf. Mahéga," he added with a peculiar smile, "is very different."

"How do you mean, Wingenund?"

"Black-Wolf," replied the youth, "is a warrior, and has no fear, but he is not like Mahéga; an antelope is not an elk!"

While this conversation was going on, the party entered the encampment, and wound their way among its scattered lodges, towards that of Tamenund, where, as the War-Eagle informed Reginald, a feast was prepared for his reception, to which Mahéga and the other Osage leaders were invited.

On arriving before the great lodge, Reginald and his companions dismounted, and giving their horses to the youths in attendance, shook hands in succession with the principal chiefs and braves of the two nations. Reginald was much struck by the benevolent and dignified countenance of the Delaware chief; but in spite of himself, and of a preconceived dislike which he was inclined to entertain towards Mahéga or Red-hand, his eye rested on that haughty chieftain with mingled surprise and admiration. He was nearly a head taller than those by whom he was surrounded; and his limbs, though cast in a Herculean mould, showed the symmetrical proportions which are so distinctive of the North American Indians; his forehead was bold and high, his nose aquiline, and his mouth broad, firm, and expressive of most determined character; his eye was rather small, but bright and piercing as a hawk's; his hair had been all shaven from his head, with the exception of the scalp-lock on the crown, which was painted scarlet, and interwoven with a tuft of horsehair dyed of the same colour. Around his muscular throat was suspended a collar formed from the claws of the grizzly bear, ornamented with parti-coloured beads, entwined with the delicate fur of the white ermine; his hunting-shirt and leggins were of the finest antelope skin, and his mocassins were adorned with beads and the stained quills of the porcupine. He leaned carelessly on a bow, which few men in the tribe could bend. At his back were slung his arrows in a quiver made of wolf-skin, so disposed that the grinning visage of the animal was seen above his shoulder, while a war-club and scalping-knife, fastened to his belt, completed the formidable Mahéga's equipment.

As he glanced his eye over the party of white men, there was an expression of scornful pride on his countenance, which the quick temper of their youthful leader was ill disposed to brook, had not the prudent counsels of the Guide prepared him for the exercise of self-command. Nevertheless, as he turned from the Osage chief to the bulky proportions of his gigantic follower, Mike Smith, he felt that it was like comparing a lion with an ox; and that in the event of a quarrel between them, the rifle alone could render its issue doubtful.

The feast of welcome was now prepared in the lodge of Tamenund, which was composed of bison skins stretched upon poles, arranged in the form of a horse-shoe, and covering an extent of ground apparently not less than twenty yards in length. Reginald observed also several smaller lodges immediately adjoining that of the chief, on one side, and on the other a circular tent of wax-cloth, or painted canvass, evidently procured from white men, as it was of excellent texture, and its door, or aperture, protected by double folds of the same material.

While he was still looking at this comparatively civilized dwelling, with some curiosity to know by whom it might be tenanted, the folds of the opening were pushed aside, and an elderly man appeared, who, after contemplating for a moment the newly-arrived group, came forward to offer them a friendly salutation. He was apparently between fifty and sixty; but his years were not easily guessed, for his snow-white hair might seem to have numbered seventy winters; while from the uprightness of his carriage, and the elasticity of his step, he seemed scarcely past the vigour of middle life. In figure he was tall and slight; his countenance, though tanned by long exposure to the sun, was strikingly attractive, and his mild blue eye beamed with an expression of benevolence not to be mistaken. His dress was a black frock of serge, fastened at the waist by a girdle of the same colour, from which was suspended a small bag, wherein he carried the few simples and instruments requisite for his daily offices of charity and kindness. Dark grey trousers of the coarsest texture, and mocassins of buffalo hide, completed the dress of Paul Müller, already mentioned by Wingenund to Reginald as the "Black Father;" under which name, translated according to their various languages, the pious and excellent Missionary was known among the Delawares, Osages, Ioways, Otoes, Konsas, and other tribes then inhabiting the regions lying between the Missouri and the Arkansas.

Such was the man who now came forward to greet the newly-arrived party; and such was the irresistible charm of his voice and manner, that from the first Reginald felt himself constrained to love and respect him.

The feast being now ready, and Reginald having pointed out Baptiste and Bearskin as his officers, or lieutenants, they were invited with him to sit down in the lodge of Tamenund, with the principal chiefs of the Delawares, the Chief and Great Medicine Man* of the Osages, and the Black Father. (Mike Smith and the other white men being feasted by a brave in an adjoining lodge.) The pipe was lighted, and having been passed twice round the party with silent gravity, the Great Medicine made a speech, in which he praised the virtues and hospitality of Tamenund, and paid many compliments to the white guests; after which a substantial dinner was set before

* In describing the manners and distinctions of rank among the Indians of the Missouri plains, it is necessary to adopt the terms in common use among the guides and traders, however vague and unsatisfactory those terms may be. In these tribes the chieftainship is partly hereditary and partly elective; there is usually one Great Chief, and there are also chiefs of a second degree, who are chiefs of different bands in the tribe; next to these in rank are the "Braves," the leading warriors of the nation; and in order to be qualified for admission into this rank, an Indian must have killed an enemy or given other sufficient evidence of courage and capacity. When a war-council is held, the *opinion of the principal Brave is* frequently preferred *before that of the chief*

* "Medicine-men." This term (commonly used by traders among the Indians beyond the Mississippi) signifies the "priests," or "mystery-men," who are set apart for the celebration of all religious rites and ceremonies. They are the same class as those who were described by Charlevoix, and other early French writers, as "Jongleurs," because they unite medical practice to their sacerdotal office, and, more especially in the former, exercise all manner of absurd mummery. Their dress, character, and habits vary according to the tribe to which they belong; but they are genuine "Jongleurs" throughout.

them, consisting of roasted buffalo-ribs, venison, and boiled maize.

Reginald had never before been present at an Indian feast, and though he had the appetite naturally belonging to his age and health, he soon found that he was no match, as a trencherman, for those among whom he was now placed; and before they had half finished their meal, he replaced his knife in its sheath and announced himself satisfied.

The old chief smiled good-humouredly, and said that he would soon do better, while Mahéga, quietly commencing an attack upon a third buffalo-rib, glanced at him with a look of contempt that he was at no pains to conceal, and which, as may well be imagined, increased our hero's dislike for the gigantic Osage.

CHAPTER XIX.

Reginald and his party at the Indian encampment.

While Reginald and his two companions were feasting with Tamenund, a similar repast was laid before the rest of the party, in the lodge of a brave named Maque-o-nah, or the "Bear-asleep," at which Mike Smith occupied the centre, or principal seat, and next to him sat Monsieur Perrot—the latter personage being very curious to see the culinary arrangements made for this, his first Indian banquet. He was horrified at observing the carelessness with which they thrust half the side of a buffalo to the edge of a huge fire of undried wood, leaving a portion of the meat to be singed and burnt, while other parts were scarcely exposed to the heat; he could not refrain from expressing to one of the Canadian coureurs des Bois, in his own language, his contempt and pity for the ignorant savages, who thus presumed to desecrate a noble science, which ranked higher, in his estimation, than poetry, painting, or sculpture; but he was warned that he must be very careful neither to reject, nor show any distaste for the food set before him, as, by so doing, he would give mortal offence to his entertainers. It was ludicrous in the extreme to watch the poor Frenchman's attempts at imparting to his features a smile of satisfaction, when a wooden bowl was placed before him, filled with half boiled maize, and beside it one of the buffalo ribs, evidently least favoured by the fire, as it was scarce warmed through, and was tough and stringy as shoe-leather. After bestowing upon sundry portions of it many fruitless attempts at mastication, he contrived, unperceived, to slip what remained of the meat into the pocket of his jacket, and then laughed with great self-satisfaction at the trick he had played his uncivilized hosts.

When the feast was concluded in Tamenund's lodge, Reginald desired his men to unpack one of the bales, which he pointed out, and to spread its contents before him; the savages gathered round the coveted and glittering objects, with eager but silent astonishment, while he separated the presents which, by the advice of Baptiste, were now distributed among their chiefs: to Tamenund he apportioned a large blanket of scarlet cloth, a silver mounted pistol, and a basket containing mirrors, beads, and trinkets, for his wives and daughters. To Mahéga a bridle ornamented with beads, several pounds of tobacco, powder, and lead, a fowling-piece, and a blanket of blue woollen-stuff. The features of the Osage Chief relaxed into a grim smile of satisfaction as he received these valuable gifts, and he so far overcame the repulsive sternness of his usual character as to seize Reginald's hand, and to tell him that he was a great chief, and good to his Indian brothers. The other presents having been distributed among the chiefs and braves, according to their rank, the feast was broken up and they retired to their respective lodges; Reginald, Baptiste, and M. Perrot, being accommodated in that of Tamenund himself, and Bearskin, with the rest of the white-men's party, in those lodges which have before been mentioned as being contiguous to that of the old chief.

During the first night that he spent in his new quarters, the excitement, and novelty of the scene, banished sleep from the eyes of Reginald, and finding himself restless, he arose half an hour before daybreak, to enjoy the early freshness of the morning. Throwing his rifle over his arm, he was about to leave the lodge, when Baptiste touched him, and inquired in a low voice, if he were prepared with a reply in case of being challenged by any of the scouts around the encampment; with some shame he confessed he had forgotten it, and the guide then instructed him, if he were challenged, to say "*Lenape n'a ki Netis*," or "I am Netis, the friend of the Delawares." Being thus prepared, and carrying with him the few articles requisite for a prairie toilet, he stepped out into the open air. Close by the opening of the lodge he saw a tall figure stretched on the grass, enveloped in a buffalo-robe, the hairy fell of which was silvered with the heavy night-dew; it was War-Eagle, who rarely slept in lodge or tent, and whose quick eye, though he neither moved nor spoke, discerned his white brother in a moment, although the latter could not recognize his friend.

Reginald pursued his way through the encampment to its extremity, where the streamlet before mentioned wound its course among the dells and hillocks of the prairie, until it reached the larger river that flowed through the distant forest. After following the banks of the stream for one or two miles, the red streaks in the eastern horizon gave notice of day's approach, and observing near him a hill, somewhat more elevated than those by which it was surrounded, Reginald climbed to its top, in order to observe the effect of sunrise on that wild and picturesque scene.

To the westward, the undulations of the prairie, wrapped in heavy folds of mist, rose in confused heaps like the waves of a boundless ocean: to the south, he could just distinguish the lodges and the smouldering fires of the encampment, whence, at intervals, there fell upon his ear mingled and indistinct sounds, disagreeable perhaps in themselves, but rendered harmonious by distance, and by their unisor with the wildness of the surrounding objects; while to the eastward lay a dense and gloomy range of woods, over the summits of whose foliage the dawning sun was shedding a stream of golden light.

Reginald gazed upon the scene with wonder

and delight; and every moment while he gazed called into existence richer and more varied beauties. The mists and exhalations rising from the plain curled themselves into a thousand fantastic shapes around the points and projections of the hills, where they seemed to hang like mantles which the Earth had cast from her bosom, as being rendered unnecessary by the appearance of the day; swarms of children and of dusky figures began to emerge from the encampment, and troops of horses to crop the pasture on the distant hills, while the splendour of the sun, now risen in its full glory, lit up with a thousand varying hues the eastern expanse of boundless forest. Reginald's heart was not insensible to the impressions naturally excited by such a scene; and while he admired its variegated beauties, his thoughts were raised in adoration to that Almighty and beneficent Being, whose temple is the Earth, and whose are the "cattle upon a thousand hills."

Having made his way again to the banks of the stream, and found a spot sheltered by alder and poplar trees, he bathed and made his morning toilet; after which he returned towards the encampment, his body refreshed by his bath, and his mind attuned to high and inspiring thoughts by the meditation in which he had been engaged. As he strolled leisurely along, he observed a spot where the trees were larger, and the shade apparently more dense than the other portions of the valley; and, being anxious to make himself acquainted with all the localities in the neighbourhood of his new home, he followed a small beaten path, which, after sundry windings among the alders, brought him to an open space screened on three sides by the bushes, and bounded on the fourth by the stream. Reginald cast his eyes around this pleasant and secluded spot, until they rested upon an object that rivetted them irresistibly. It was a female figure seated at the root of an ancient poplar, over a low branch of which one arm was carelessly thrown, while with the other she held a book, which she was reading with such fixed attention as to be altogether unconscious of Reginald's approach. Her complexion was dark, but clear and delicate, and the rich brown hair which fell over her neck and shoulders, still damp and glossy from her morning ablutions, was parted on her forehead by a wreath of wild flowers twined from among those which grew around the spot; the contour of her figure, and her unstudied attitude of repose, realized the classic dreams of Nymph and Nereid, while her countenance wore an expression of angelic loveliness, such as Reginald had never seen or imagined.

He gazed—and gazing on those sweet features, he saw the red full lips move unconsciously, while they followed the subject that absorbed her attention, and forgetful that he was intruding on retirement, he waited, entranced, until those downcast eyes should be raised. At length she looked up, and seeing the figure of a man within a few paces of her, she sprang to her feet with the lightness of a startled antelope, and darting on him a look of mingled surprise and reproof, suppressed the exclamation of alarm that rose to her lips. Reginald would fain have addressed the lovely being before him, he would fain have excused his unintended intrusion; but the words died upon his lips, and it was almost mechanically that he doffed his hunting cap, and stood silent and uncovered before her! Recovering from the momentary confusion, she advanced a step towards him, and with an ingenuous blush held out her hand, saying in a gentle tone of inquiry, and with the purest accent, "Netla, my brother's friend!"

"The same, fair creature," replied Reginald, whose wonder and admiration were still more excited by the untaught grace and dignity of her manner, as well as by hearing his own tongue so sweetly pronounced; "but, in the name of Heaven, who—what—whence can you be?" Blushing more deeply at the animation and eagerness of his manner, she was for a moment silent, when he continued, striking his hand on his forehead:—"Oh, I have it, fool, tortoise, that I was. You are 'Prairie-bird,' the sister of whom Wingenund has told me so much." Then, gently pressing the little hand which he had taken, he added, "Dear Wingenund! he saved my life; his sister will not consider me a stranger?"

Again a warmer blush mantled on the cheek of Prairie-bird, as she replied, "You are no stranger: you speak of Wingenund's good deed: you are silent about your own! You drew War-Eagle from the deep and swift waters. I have heard it all, and have often wished to see you and thank you myself." There was a modest simplicity in her manner as she uttered these few words that confirmed the impression made on Reginald by the first glimpse of her lovely form and features; but beyond this there was something in the tone of her voice that found its way direct to his heart; it fell upon his ear like an old familiar strain of music, and he felt unwilling to break the silence that followed its closing accents.

It is not our province, in a simple narrative of this kind, to discuss the oft-disputed question, whether love at first sight deserves the name of love; whether it is merely a passing emotion, which, though apparently strong, a brief lapse of time may efface; or, whether there be really secret irresistible natural impulses, by which two human beings, who meet together for the first time, feel as if they had known and loved each other for years, and as if the early cherished visions of fancy, the aspirations of hope, the creations of imagination the secret, undefined longings of the heart, were all at once embodied and realized.* We are inclined to believe that, although not frequent, instances sometimes occur of this instinctive sympathy and attraction, and that, when they do so, the tree of affection, (like the fabled palm at the touch of the Genius' wand,) starts into immediate luxuriance of flower and foliage, striking its tenacious roots far into the kindly soil, destined thenceforward to become the nurture of its verdant youth, the support of its mature strength, and at length the resting-place of its leafless and time-stricken decay.

Such seemed to be the case with Reginald and Prairie-bird, for as they looked one at the other, each was unconsciously occupied with teeming thoughts that neither could define nor

* See Schiller's "Bride of Messina."

xpress, and both felt relieved at hearing approaching footsteps and the voice of the Black Father, who called out in English,

"Come, my child, I have allowed you full ime this morning; we will return to the camp." As he spoke his eye fell upon Reginald, and he added, courteously, "You have been early abroad, young sir."

"I have," replied Reginald. "I went to the op of yonder heights to see the sunrise, and was amply repaid by the beauty of the scene; on my return, I wandered accidentally into this secluded spot, and trust that my intrusion has been forgiven."

"I believe that my dear child and pupil would forgive a greater offence than that, in one who has shown so much kindness to her brothers," replied the Missionary, smiling; and he added, in a low voice, addressing the Prairie-bird in his own language, "Indeed, my child, I think he deserves our friendly welcome; for, unless his countenance strongly belies his character, it expresses all those good qualities which Wingenund taught us to expect."

"Stay, sir," said Reginald, colouring highly; "let me not participate without your knowledge, n your communications to Prairie-bird. I have avelled much in Germany, and the language s familiar to me."

"Then, my young friend," said Paul Müller, aking his hand kindly, "you have only learned om what I said, how hard a task you will have o fulfil the expectations that Wingenund has d us to entertain."

"I can promise nothing," replied Reginald, ancing towards the maiden, "but a true ngue, a ready hand, and an honest heart; if ese can serve my friend's sister, methinks e may expect them without being disappointd."

The words in themselves were nothing remarkable, but there was an earnest feeling in ne tone in which they were spoken that made Prairie-bird's heart beat quicker; she answerd him by a look, but said nothing. Wonderul is the expression, the magic eloquence of e human eye, and yet how is its power tenold increased when the rays of its glance pass rough the atmosphere even of dawning love. Reginald longed to know whence and who she ould be, this child of the wilderness, who had o suddenly, so irresistibly, engaged his feelngs; above all he longed to learn whether her heart and affections were free, and that single book, translated by the sanguine self-partiality of love, made him internally exclaim, "Her heart is not another's!" Whether his conjecture proved correct the after course of this tale will show, meanwhile we cannot forbear our admiration at the marvellous rapidity with which our hero, at his first interview with Prairie-bird settled this point to his own satisfaction. The little party now strolled towards the camp, and as they went, Reginald, seeing that Prairie-bird still held in her hand the book that he had seen her peruse with so much attention, said,

"May I inquire the subject of your studies this morning?"

"Certainly," she replied, with grave and sweet simplicity; "it is the subject of my study every morning; the book was given me by my dear father and instructor now by my side. I have much to thank him for; all I know, all I enjoy, almost all I feel, but most of all for this book, which he has taught me to love, and in some degree to understand."

As she spoke she placed in Reginald's hand a small copy of Luther's translation of the Bible; in the fly-leaf before the title page was written, "Given to Prairie-bird by her loving father and instructor, Paul Müller." Reginald read this inscription half aloud, repeating to himself the words "Müller," "father," and coupling them with the strange enigmas formerly uttered by Wingenund respecting the origin of Prairie-bird, he was lost in conjecture as to their meaning.

"I see your difficulty," said the Missionary; "you do not understand how she can call Wingenund and War-Eagle brothers, and me father. In truth, she has from her earliest childhood been brought up by Tamenund as his daughter, and as I reside chiefly with this Delaware band, I have made it my constant occupation and pleasure to give her such instruction as my humble means admit; she has been entrusted to us by the mysterious decrees of Providence; and though the blood of neither flows in her veins, Tamenund and I have, according to our respective offices, used our best endeavours to supply the place of natural parents.'

"Dear, dear father," said Prairie-bird, pressing his hand to her lips, and looking up in his face with tearful eyes, "you are and have been everything to me, instructor, comforter, guide, and father! My Indian father, too, and my brothers are all kind and loving to me. I have read in the books that you have lent me many tales and histories of unkindness and hatred between parents and children, among nations enlightened and civilized. I have had every wish gratified before expressed, and every comfort provided. What could a father do for a child, that you have not done for me?"

As she spoke she looked up in the Missionary's face with a countenance so beaming with full affection, that the old man pressed her in his arms, and kissing her forehead, muttered over her a blessing that he was too much moved to pronounce aloud; after a pause of a few minutes, he said to Reginald, with his usual benevolent smile, "We only know you yet by your Indian name of 'Netis'—how are you called in the States? We inquired of War-eagle and Wingenund, but they either did not remember, or could not pronounce your name?"

"Reginald Brandon," replied our hero.

Prairie-bird started, and abruptly said, "Again, again; say it once more?"

Reginald repeated it, and she pronounced the first name slowly after him, pressing her hand upon her forehead, and with her eye fixed on vacancy, while broken exclamations came from his lips.

"What are you thinking of, dear child?" said the Missionary, somewhat surprised and alarmed by her manner.

"Nothing, dear Father," she replied, with a faint smile; "it was a dream, a strange dream which that name recalled and confused my head; we are now close to the camp, I will go in and rest awhile; perhaps you may like to talk more with Ne—I mean," she added hesi

tating, "with Reginald." So saying, and saluting them with that natural grace which belonged to all her movements, she withdrew towards the camp, and Reginald's eyes followed her retreating figure until it was lost behind the canvass-folds that protected the opening to her tent

CHAPTER XX.

Reginald holds a conversation with the missionary.

Reginald still kept his eyes on the opening through which Prairie-bird had disappeared into the tent, as though they could have pierced through the canvass that concealed from his view its lovely inhabitant: his feelings were in a state of confusion and excitement, altogether new to him; for if, in his European travels, he had paid a passing tribute of admiration to the beauties who had crossed his path, and whom his remarkable personal advantages had rendered by no means insensible to his homage, the surface only of his heart had been touched, whereas now its deepest fountains were stirred, and the troubled waters gushed forth with overwhelming force.

He was recalled to himself by the voice of the missionary, who, without appearing to notice his abstraction, said, "My son, if you choose that we should prolong our walk, I am ready to accompany you." If the truth must be told, Reginald could at that moment scarcely endure the presence of any human being: he felt an impulse to rush into the woods, or over the plain, and to pour forth in solitude the torrent of feelings by which he was oppressed; but he controlled himself, not only because he really felt a respect for the good missionary, but also because he hoped through him to obtain some information respecting the extraordinary being who had taken such sudden possession of his thoughts; he replied, therefore, that he would willingly accompany him, and they took their way together along the banks of the streamlet, alternately observing on the scenery and surrounding objects.

This desultory conversation did not long suit the eager and straightforward character of Reginald Brandon; and he changed it by abruptly inquiring of his companion, whether he knew anything of the history and parentage of Prairie-bird.

"Not much," replied Paul Müller, smiling; "she was with this band of Delawares when I first came to reside among them; if any one knows her history it must be Tamenund; but he keeps it a profound secret, and gives out among the tribe that she was sent to him by the Great Spirit, and that as long as she remains with the band they will be successful in hunting and in war."

"But how," inquired Reginald, "can he make such a tale pass current among a people who are well known to consider the female sex in so inferior and degraded a light?"

"He has effected it," replied the missionary, "partly by accident, partly by her extraordinary beauty and endowments, and partly, I must own, by my assistance, which I have given because *I thereby ensured to her the kindest and most* respectful treatment, and also endeavoured under God's blessing, to make her instrumental in sowing the seed of His truth among these benighted savages."

"Let me understand this more in detail," said Reginald, "if the narration does not trouble you."

"Her first appearance among the Delawares, as they have told me," said the missionary, was as follows:—"Their prophet, or great medicine man, dreamed that under a certain tree was deposited a treasure that should enrich the tribe and render them fortunate: a party was sent by order of the chief to search the spot indicated, and on their arrival they found a female child wrapped in a covering of beaver skin, and reposing on a couch of Turkey of feathers; these creatures being supposed to preside peculiarly over the fate of the Delawares, they brought back the child with great ceremony to the village, where they placed her under the care of the chief; set apart a tent or lodge for her own peculiar use, and ever since that time have continued to take every care of her comfort and safety."

"I suppose," interrupted Reginald, "the dream of the great medicine, and all its accompaniments, were secretly arranged between him and the chief?"

"Probably they were," replied Paul; "but you must beware how you say as much to any Delaware; if you did not risk your life, you would give mortal offence. After all, an imposition that has resulted in harm to no one, and in so much good to an interesting and unprotected creature, may be forgiven."

"Indeed I will not gainsay it," replied our hero; "pray continue your narrative."

"My sacred office, and the kindly feeling entertained towards me by these Indians, gave me frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Olitipa, or the 'Prairie-bird;' and I found in her such an amiable disposition, and so quick an apprehension, that I gave my best attention to the cultivation of talents, which might, I hoped, some day produce a harvest of usefulness. In reading, writing, and in music, she needed but little instruction; I furnished her from time to time with books, and paper, and pencils; an old Spanish guitar, probably taken from some of the dwellings of that people in Missouri, enabled her to practise simple melodies, and you would be surprised at the sweetness with which she now sings words, strung together by herself in English and German, and also in the Delaware tongue, adapting them to wild airs, either such as she hears among the Indians, or invents herself; I took especial pains to instruct her in the practical elements of a science that my long residence among the different tribes has rendered necessary and familiar to me,—I mean that of medicine, as connected with the rude botany of the woods and prairies; and so well has she profited by my instruction, and by her own persevering researches, that there is scarcely a tree, or gum, or herb possessing any sanatory properties which she does not know and apply to the relief of those around her.

"Indeed," said Reginald, laughing; "I had not expected to find this last among the accomplishments of Prairie-bird'

"You were mistaken then," replied Paul Müller; "nay, more; I fear that, in your estimate of what are usually termed female accomplishments, you have been accustomed to lay too much stress on those which are light or trifling, and too little on those which are useful and properly feminine; even in settled and civilized countries the most grievous fevers and ailments to which we are subject, require the ministration of a female nurse; can it be then unreasonable that we should endeavour to mingle, in their education, some knowledge of the remedies which they may be called upon to administer, and of the bodily ills which it is to be their province to alleviate?"

"You are right," answered Reginald, modestly; "and I entreat your pardon for the hasty levity with which I spoke on the subject. I am well aware that, in olden times, no young woman's education was held to be complete without some knowledge both of the culinary and healing arts; and I much doubt whether society has not suffered from their having altogether abandoned the cultivation of these in favour of singing, dancing, and reading of the lightest kind."

"It is the character of the artificial state to which society is fast verging," replied Paul; "to prefer accomplishments to qualities, ornament to usefulness, luxury to comfort, tinsel to gold; setting aside the consideration of a future state, this system might be well enough, if the drawing-room, the theatre, and the ball, were the sum of human life; but it is ill calculated to render man dignified in his character, and useful to his fellow-creatures, or woman what she ought to be,—the comfort, the solace, the ornament of home."

"These observations may be true as regards England or France," replied Reginald: "but you surely would not apply them to our country?"

"To a certain extent, I do," answered the missionary. "I have been now thirty years on this continent, and have observed that, as colonists, the Americans have been very faithful imitators of these defects in their mother country; I am not sure that they will be rendered less so by their political emancipation."

The conversation was now straying rather too far from the subject to which Reginald desired to confine it; waving, therefore, all reply to the missionary's last observation, he said, "If I understood you aright, there were, beyond these studies and accomplishments of Prairie-bird, some other means employed by you, to give and preserve to her the extraordinary influence which you say that she possesses over the Indians."

"There were," replied Paul Müller: "among others, I enabled her to vaccinate most of the children in this band, by which means they escaped the fatal effects of a disorder, that has committed dreadful ravages among the surrounding tribes; and I have instructed her in some of the elementary calculations of astronomy; owing to which they look upon her as a superior being, commissioned by the Great Spirit to live among them, and to do them good; thus her person is safe, and her tent as sacred from intrusion as the great medicine lodge; I am allowed to occupy a compartment in it, where I keep our little stores of books and medicines, and she goes about the camp on her errands of benevolence, followed by the attachment and veneration of all classes and ages!"

"Happy existence!" exclaimed Reginald; "and yet," he added, musing; "she cannot, surely, be doomed through life to waste such sweetness on an air so desert."

"I know not," answered the missionary. "God's purposes are mysterious, and the instruments that he chooses for effecting them, various as the flowers on the prairie. Many an Indian warrior has that sweet child turned from the path of blood, more than one uplifted tomahawk has fallen harmless at the voice of her entreaty; nay, I have reason to hope that in Wingenund, and in several others of the tribe, she has partially uprooted the weeds of hatred and revenge, and sown, in their stead, the seeds of Gospel truth. Surely, Reginald Brandon, you would not call such an existence wasted?"

"That would I not, indeed," replied the young man, with emphasis; "it is an angel's office!" he added, inaudibly, "and it is performed by an angel!"

Although he could have talked, or listened, or the subject of the Prairie-bird for hours together, Reginald began already to feel that sensitive reserve respecting the mention of her name to another which always accompanies even the earliest dawnings of love; and he turned the conversation by inquiring of the venerable missionary, whether he would kindly communicate something of his own history; and explain how he had come from so remote a distance to pass the evening of life among the Indians.

"The tale is very brief, and the motives very simple. I was born in Germany, and having early embraced the tenets of the United Brethren, of whom you have probably heard in that country under the name of 'Herrn-hüter,' I received a pressing invitation from Heckewalder, then in England, to join him in his projected missionary journey to North America. I gladly accepted the offer, and after a short stay in London, embarked with that learned and amiable man,—who soon became what he now is,—the nearest and dearest friend I have on earth,—and I placed myself under his guidance in the prosecution of the grand objects of our undertaking, which were these:—to endeavour to convert the Indian nations to Christianity, not as the Spaniards had pretended to attempt, by fire, and sword, and violence, but by going unarmed and peaceably among them, studying their languages, characters, and history; and while showing in our own persons an example of piety and self-denial, to eradicate patiently the more noxious plants from their moral constitution, and to mould such as were good and wholesome to the purposes of religious truth. God be praised, our labours have not been altogether without effect; but I blush for my white brethren when I confess that the greatest obstacle to our success has been found in the vices, the open profligacy, the violence, and the cruelty of those who have called themselves Christians. Heckewalder has confined his exertions chiefly to the Indians remaining in Pennsylvania and the Western territory, mine have been mostly employed among the wandering

and wilder tribes who inhabit this remote and boundless region."

"I have often heard your pious friend's name," said Reginald; "he enjoys the reputation of being the most eminent Indian linguist in our country, and he is supposed to know the Delaware language as well as his own."

"He is indeed," said Paul, "the most skilful and successful labourer in this rude, but not unfruitful vineyard; now and then, at remote intervals, I contrive, by means of some returning hunter or Indian agent, to communicate with him, and his letters always afford me matter of consolation and encouragement; though I was much cast down when he announced to me the cruel and wanton massacre of his Indian flock near the banks of the Ohio."

"I have heard of it," replied Reginald; "I regret to say that the outrage was committed not very far from the spot where my father lives."

"Do you live in that neighbourhood?" exclaimed the missionary, suddenly catching his arm; "then you may, perhaps—but no, it cannot be," he muttered to himself. "This youth can know nothing of it."

"My honoured friend," replied Reginald, colouring at the idea suggested by the words which he had overheard. "I trust you do not believe that my father or any of my kindred had a share in those atrocities!"

"You misunderstood me altogether, I assure you," answered the missionary; "my exclamation had reference to another subject. But I see War-Eagle coming this way; probably he is bent upon some hunting excursion in which you may wish to be his companion."

"I shall gladly do so," replied Reginald, "as soon as I have breakfasted; my faithful follower, Perrot, desired very much that I should taste some collops of venison, which he said that he could dress in a style somewhat superior to that of the Indian cookery. Will you share them with me?"

The missionary excused himself, as he had already taken his morning meal, and was about to return to the tent of Prairie-bird.

Reginald assured the good man of the pleasure which he had found in his conversation, and expressed a hope that he would be enabled soon to enjoy it again, as there was much information respecting the habits, religion, and character of the different Indian tribes which he felt anxious to acquire, and which none could be better able to communicate.

"Whatever instruction or information I may have collected during my residence among them, is freely at your service," replied Paul Müller; "and if you find yourself in any difficulty or embarrassment where my advice can be of use, you may always command it. You know," he added, smiling, "they consider me great medicine, and thus I am able to say and do many things among them which would not be permitted in another white man." So saying, he shook hands with Reginald, and returned slowly towards the encampment.

War-Eagle now came up, and greeting his friend with his usual cordiality, inquired whether he would accompany him in the chase of the elk, herds of which had been seen at no great distance. Reginald acceded to the proposal, and, having hastily despatched the collops prepared by Perrot, the two friends left the village on foot, and took their way towards the timber in the valley.

The day was hot, and the speed at which the agile Indian unconsciously strode along, would have soon discomfited a less active pedestrian than Reginald; but having been well seasoned in his hunting excursions with Baptiste, he found no difficulty in keeping pace with his friend, and amused himself as they went, by asking him a variety of questions respecting the country, the tribe, and its language, to all of which War-Eagle replied with much intelligence and candour.

As Reginald had not seen Wingenund, he asked his companion how it happened that the youth did not accompany them. "He is gone," replied War-Eagle, "to bring turkeys to the camp."

"Does he shoot them?" inquired Reginald.

"No, he takes them—my white brother shall see; it is not far from the Elk Path."

When they reached the wooded bottom, War-Eagle struck into a small track which seemed to have been made by a streamlet in spring, and, having followed it for about a mile, they came to a more open woodland scene, where the Indian pointed, as they passed along, to scattered feathers and foot-tracks of turkeys in abundance. They had not proceeded far, when he uttered a low exclamation of surprise as he discovered Wingenund stretched at the foot of a tree, with his eyes busily fixed upon something which he held in his hand, and which so riveted his attention that he was not aware of their approach Beside him lay two old and two young turkeys which he had caught and killed; the friends had not looked at him many seconds, before he raised his eyes and perceived them; starting to his feet he made an ineffectual attempt to conceal that which he had been holding in his hand, which was, in fact, a sheet of coarse white paper. Reginald drew near and said to him, "Come, Wingenund, you must show Netis what you hold in your hand; I am sure it is no harm, and if it is a secret, I will keep it."

Wingenund, in some confusion, handed the scroll to Reginald, who saw at the first glance that it was a fragment of an elementary vocabulary of Delaware and English words, written in a free, bold character; he ran his eye over the paper which contained chiefly phrases of the most simple kind, such as "*N'menne*, I drink," "*N'ani pa wi*, I stand," "*Tokelan*, it rains," "*Loo*, true," "*Yuni*, this," "*Na-ni*, that," &c., &c.; and a smile came over his features when his eye met his own name, "Netis," with its translation, "dear friend." Below this he read, "N'quti," Nisha, Nacha, Newo, and a succession of single words, which he rightly conjectured to be numerals, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., and at the bottom of the page was a long sentence in the Lenape tongue, which began as follows: "*Ki wetochemelenk talli epian awasagame*, &c."—"What is this last sentence, Wingenund?" inquired Reginald.

"It is the prayer," replied the youth, "that the Good Spirit taught the white men to say, when he came to live among them."

"And who wrote all these words for you?"

"Prairie-bird wrote them, and every day she

teaches me to understand the marks on the paper."

Reginald's eyes strayed unconsciously to that part of the sheet where he had seen his own name written by the Prairie-bird's hand. "Happy boy!" he mentally ejaculated, "to sit at her feet and draw instruction from her lips! With such a teacher, methinks I could learn the Lenape tongue in a month!—What says my brother?" he continued, aloud, addressing War-Eagle, whose fine countenance wore an expression of indifference, almost amounting to contempt—"What says my brother of this paper?"

"It is perhaps good," replied the Indian, gravely; "for the black father, and for the white man—but not for the Lenape. The Great Spirit has given him a heart to feel, and a hand to fight, and eyes to see the smallest track on the grass—that is enough. Our fathers knew no more, and they were great, and strong, and brave! Chiefs among the nations! What are we now—few, and weak, and wandering; it is better for us to live and die like them, and we shall hunt with them in the happy fields. Let us go and show Netis where Wingenund takes the turkeys." So saying, he turned and led the way, followed by his two companions.

CHAPTER XXI.

On arrival at Mooshanne.—A calm ashore after a storm at sea.

While the events narrated in the preceding chapter, were occurring in the Western wilderness, the family at Mooshanne had been thrown into a state of the greatest dismay and confusion, by the arrival of Captain L'Estrange's first letter, announcing the flight of Ethelston with his daughter, and depicting his conduct in the blackest colours. Colonel Brandon had perused its contents half a dozen times, and they had produced traces of anxiety upon his countenance, too evident to escape the observation of Lucy, so that he was obliged to break to her by degrees the painful intelligence of her lover's infidelity; with a calmness that surprised him, she insisted on reading the letter; as she proceeded her brow crimsoned with indignation, and those blue eyes, usually beaming with the gentlest expression, flushed with an angry lustre.

Colonel Brandon knew full well the affection she had long conceived for Ethelston, and though his own feelings were deeply wounded by the misconduct of one whom he had loved and trusted as a son, they were, at present, overpowered by the fears which he entertained of the effect which this unexpected blow might produce on Lucy's health and happiness. He was, therefore, relieved by observing the anger expressed on her countenance, and prepared himself to hear the deserved reproaches on her former lover, which seemed ready to burst from her tongue. What was his surprise when he saw her tear the letter in pieces before his face, and heard her, while she set her pretty little foot upon them, exclaim,

"Dear, dear father, how could you for a moment believe such a tale of vile, atrocious falsehood?"

However disinclined the Colonel might be to believe anything to the disadvantage of Ethelston, there was so much circumstantial evidence to condemn him, that he felt it his duty to prepare his child for the worst at once, and to point out to her how they already knew that Ethelston had been wounded and conveyed to the house of L'Estrange, that his long absence was unexplained, and lastly that the character of the French Commodore, as an officer and a man of honour, was unimpeached.

Lucy heard him to the end, the glow on her cheek assumed a warmer hue and the little foot beat with a nervous and scarcely perceptible motion on the floor, as she replied, "Father, I will believe that the letter is a forgery, or that the French officer, or Commodore, or Admiral, is a madman, but never that Ethelston is a villain."

"My dear Lucy," said the Colonel; "I am almost as unwilling to think ill of Ethelston as you can be yourself; but, alas! I have seen more than you of the inconstancy of men; and I know, too well, that many who have enjoyed a good reputation, have yet been found unable to withstand temptation, such as may have beset Ethelston while an inmate of the same house with the Creole beauty—"

"Dear Father," answered Lucy, colouring yet more deeply; though it were possible that Ethelston, in the presence of greater attractions, may have yielded to them his affections and withdrawn them from one who had hoped to possess and treasure them for life, though this may be possible, it is not possible that he should be guilty of a violation of the laws of hospitality and honour, such as that slanderous paper lays to his charge; promise me, dearest father, to suspend your belief, and never to speak on this subject again, until it is God's pleasure that the truth shall be brought to light."

"I promise you, my sweet child," said her father; "and may that Merciful Being grant that your trust be not disappointed."

"I have no fears," said Lucy, and as she spoke her eyes beamed with that full undoubting love, such as can only be felt by one who has never known what it is to deceive or to be deceived.

Days and weeks passed on without any intelligence of Ethelston; and while the fears of Colonel Brandon become more confirmed, the agony of suspense, and the sickness of deferred hope began to prey upon the spirits of his daughter; she never alluded to the forbidden subject, but her nervous anxiety, when the weekly letter-bag was opened, clearly showed that it was ever in her mind; nevertheless she continued her occasional excursions to Marietta, and visited, as usual, those around Mooshanne who were sick or in distress, so that neither her mother, nor aunt Mary, detected the anxiety by which she was tortured. One evening, half an hour before sunset, as the family party were seated at their simple supper, the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard approaching at full speed, from which the rider dismounted, and lifting the latch of the unlocked door, entered the house. Traversing the vestibule with hasty strides, and apparently guided by instinct to the apartment in which the family were assembled, he threw open the door, and Ethelston stood

before the astonished party. His countenance was haggard from fatigue and exposure to the sun, and his whole appearance indicated exhaustion. Lucy turned deadly pale, and Colonel Brandon's constrained manner, as he rose from his chair, must have convinced the new comer that his return was productive of other feelings than those of unmingled pleasure. He was moving, however, a few steps forward to pay his first respects to Mrs. Brandon, when the Colonel, touching him lightly on the arm. said, "Mr. Ethelston, I must crave a few words with you in the adjoining room."

Hitherto Lucy had remained silent, with her eyes fixed intently on Ethelston's countenance, he returned her look with one as long and fixed, the expression of his eyes was mournful, rather than joyous, but there was no trace of uneasiness or of shame. Springing from her seat, she placed her hand imploringly on the Colonel's arm, saying,

"Dear father, I told you so from the first—I knew it always—I read it now plain as the sun in heaven—that vile letter was a string of falsehoods—he is returned as he left us, with an untarnished honour."

"Thank you, dear Lucy," said Ethelston, advancing and pressing her extended hands to his lips; "blessings on that trusting affection which has rendered it impossible for you to believe ought to the prejudice of one on whom you have deigned to fix it. Colonel Brandon," he continued "I can guess how you have been misled, and appearances were, for a short time, so much against me, that I acquit, of all intentional malice, those who have misled you! Judge for yourself whether, if I were stained by the crime of which I have been accused, I could now ask, on my bended knee, for the blessing of you, my second father, and thus hold in mine, as I dare to do, the hand of your pure, trusting, and beloved child."

There was a truth in every tone of his voice, and a convincing dignity in his manner that swept away all doubts like a torrent: the Colonel embraced him with cordial affection: Aunt Mary kissed her favourite nephew over and over again, Mrs. Brandon wept tears of joy on his neck, and Lucy was so overpowered with delight, that she was perhaps scarcely conscious of all that passed around.

After they were in some degree recovered from their emotion, and had pressed Ethelston to take some refreshment; he said to the Colonel, "Now I am prepared to give you an account of my adventures, and to explain those circumstances that led to the misunderstanding under which you have so long laboured."

"Not a word—not a word will I hear of explanation, to-night, my dear boy," replied the Colonel. "I am already ashamed that I have not shown the same undoubting confidence in your rectitude both of purpose and conduct, that has been evinced from first to last by Lucy. You are weary and exhausted, the agitation of this scene has been trying to all of us; we will defer your narrative until to-morrow. Our first duty this evening, is to return our thanks to Providence for having protected you through all danger, and restored you safe to the comforts of *home.*"

As he spoke the worthy old gentleman took down a bible from the shelf, and, having desired Lucy to summon all the servants into the room, he read an appropriate chapter, and added to the selected prayer for the evening, a few impressive and affecting words of thanksgiving for the safe return of the long lost member of the family.

This duty was scarcely concluded, when the outer door was violently opened; a heavy step was heard approaching, and, without waiting to be admitted or announced, the sturdy figure of Gregson entered the room.

"The captain himself, as I live," said the honest mate. "Beg pardon, Colonel Brandon, but I heard a report of his having been seen going ten knots an hour through Marietta. So I up sticks, made sail, and was in his wake in less time than our nigger cook takes to toss off a glass of grog."

"Give me your hand, Gregson," said Ethelston, kindly; "there is not a truer, or an honester one between Marietta and China."

"Thank ye, thank ye, Captain," said the mate, giving him a squeeze that would have broken the knuckles of any hand but a sailor's; "the flipper's well enough in its way, and I trust the heart's somewhere about the right place but what the devil have they been at with you in Guadaloupe," he added, observing his chief's wearied and wasted appearance; "considering how long those rascally Frenchmen have had you in dock, they've sent you to sea in a precious state, both as to hull and rigging."

"I confess I am not over ship-shape," said Ethelston, laughing, "but my present condition is more owing to the fatigues of my tedious journey from New Orleans, than to any neglect on the part of the Frenchmen."

The Colonel now invited the worthy mate to be seated, and Lucy brewed for him, with her own fair fingers, a large tumbler of toddy, into which, by her father's desire, she poured an extra glass of rum. Ethelston, pretending to be jealous of this favour, insisted on his right to a draught, containing less potent ingredients, but administered by the same hand, and an animated conversation ensued, in the course of which Gregson inquired after the welfare of his old friend Cupid, the black cook.

"Poor fellow, he is no more," replied Ethelston, in a tone of deep feeling; "he died as he had lived, proud, brave, faithful to the last. I cannot tell you the story now, it is too sad a one for this our first evening at home;" as he spoke, his eyes met those of Lucy, and there he read all that his overcharged heart desired to know.

Soon after the allusion to this melancholy incident, the little party broke up; the evening being already far advanced, Gregson returned to Marietta; and the members of the colonel's family retired to their respective apartments, leaving Ethelston alone in the drawing-room For a few minutes he walked up and down, and pressed his hand upon his forehead, which throbbed with various and deep emotions. He took up the music whereon Lucy had written her name, the needle-work on which her fingers had been employed; he sat down on the chair she had just left, as if to satisfy himself with the assurance that all around him was not a dream; and again he vented the full gratitude

o his heart in a brief but earnest ejaculation of thanksgiving. After a short indulgence in such meditations, he retired to that rest of which he stood so much in need. The room that had been prepared for him was up stairs, and, on crossing a broad passage that led to it, he suddenly met Lucy, who was returning to her own from her mother's apartment. Whether this meeting was purely accidental, or whether Lucy remembering that she had not said Good-night, quite distinctly to her lover, lingered in her mother's room until she heard his step on the stair, we have no means of ascertaining, and therefore leave it undecided; certain it is, however, that they did meet in the passage above mentioned, and that Ethelston putting down his candle on a table that stood by, took Lucy's unresisting hand and pressed it in his own; he gazed on her blushing countenance with an intensity that can only be understood by those who, like him, have been suddenly restored to a beloved one, whose image had been ever present during a long absence, assuaging the pain of sickness, comforting him in trials, dwelling with him in the solitude of a prison, and sustaining him in the extremest perils of the storm, the fight, and the shipwreck! Though he had never been formally betrothed to her in words, and though his heart was now too full to give utterance to them, he had heard enough below to satisfy him that she had never doubted his faith—he felt that their troth was tacitly plighted to each other, and now it was almost unconsciously that their lips met and sealed the unspoken contract.

That first, long, passionate, kiss of requited love! Its raptures have been the theme of glowing prose, of impassioned verse, in all ages and climes; the powers of language have been exhausted upon it, the tongue and the pen of Genius have, for centuries borrowed for its description the warmest hues of fancy and imagination—and yet how far short do they fall of the reality! how impossible to express in words an electric torrent of feeling, more tumultuous than joy, more burning than the desert's thirst, —yet sweeter and more delicious than childhood's dream of Paradise, pouring over the heart a stream of bliss, steeping the senses in oblivion of all earthly cares, and so mysteriously blending the physical with the immaterial elements of our nature, that we feel as if, in that embrace, we could transfuse a portion of our soul and spirit into the beloved object, on whose lip that first kiss of long-treasured love is imprinted.

Brief and fleeting moments! they are gone almost before the mind is conscious of them! They could not, indeed, be otherwise than brief, for the agony of joy is like that of pain, and exhausted nature would sink under its continued excess. Precious moments, indeed! to none can they be known more than once in life; to very many, they can never be known at all. They can neither be felt nor imagined by the mere worldling, nor the sensualist; the sources of that stream of bliss must be unadulterated by aught low, or selfish; it is not enough that

"Heart and soul and sense in concert move;"

desire must go hand in hand with purity, and virtue be the handmaid of passion, or the blissful scene will lose its fairest and brightest hues.

The step of some servant was heard approaching, and Lucy, uttering a hasty good-night, returned to her room, where she bolted her door, and gave herself up to the varied emotions by which she was overcome. Tears bedewed her eyes, but they were not tears of grief; her bosom was agitated, but it was not the agitation of sorrow; her pillow was sleepless, but she courted not slumber, for her mind dwelt on the events of the past day, and gratitude for her lover's return, together with the full assurance of his untarnished honour, and undiminished affection, rendered her waking thoughts sweeter than any that sleep could have borrowed from the Land of Dreams.

On the following morning, after breakfast, when the family were assembled in the library, Ethelston, at the request of Colonel Brandon, commenced the narrative of his adventures. As the reader is already acquainted with them, until the closing scene of poor Nina's life, we shall make mention of that part of his tale, no farther than to state that, so far as truth would permit, in all that he told as well as all that he forbore to tell, he feelingly endeavoured to shield her memory from blame; the sequel of his story we shall give as narrated in his own words.

"I remained only a few days with L'Estrange after his daughter's death; during which time I used my best endeavours to console him; but, in spite of the affectionate kindness which he showed me, I felt that my presence must ever recall and refresh the remembrance of his bereavement, and I was much relieved when the arrival of one of his other married daughters with her family, gave me an excuse and an opportunity for withdrawing from Guadaloupe The vessel which had brought them from Jamaica proposed to return immediately, and I easily obtained L'Estrange's permission to sail with her, only on the condition of not serving against France during the continuance of these hostilities: when I bade him farewell he was much affected, and embraced me as if he were parting with a son, so I have at least the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that I retain his best wishes and his esteem.

"My voyage to Port-royal was prosperous; on arriving I found a brig laden with fruit just about to sail, in a few days, for New Orleans. I confess I did not much like the appearance either of the vessel, or her commander, but such was my impatience to return to Mooshanne, that I believe I would have risked the voyage in an open boat," here Ethelston looked at Lucy, on whose countenance a blushing smile showed that she well knew the meaning of his words. "I embarked," he continued "accompanied by my faithful Cupid, on board the 'Dos Amigos;' the captain was an ignorant rum-drinking Creole, besides himself there was only one white man in the crew, and the coloured men were from all countries and climates, the most reckless and turbulent gang that I had ever seen on board a ship. During the first half of the voyage, the weather being favourable, we crept along the southern coast of Cuba and past almost within sight of the Isla de Pinos, which I had so much cause to remember, thence we steered a northwesterly course, and doubled the Cape of Saint Antonio in safety

whence we had a prospect of a fair run to the Balise; but, two days after we had lost sight of the Cuban coast, it came on to blow a gale of wind which gradually increased until it became almost a hurricane from the south-west.

The brig drove helplessly before it, and from her leaky and shattered condition, as well as from the total want of seamanship exhibited by her drunken captain, I hourly expected that she would founder at sea; for twenty-four hours the gale continued with unabated violence, and the weather was so thick that no object could be discerned at two hundred yards distance; I remained constantly on deck, giving such assistance as I could render, and endeavouring to keep the captain's lips from the rum-bottle, to which he had more frequent recourse as the danger became more imminent. Being, at length, wearied out, I threw myself in my clothes on my cot, and soon fell asleep. I know not how long I slept, but I was awakened by a violent shock, accompanied by a grating grinding sound, from which I knew in an instant that the brig had struck on a rock; almost before I had time to spring from my cot, Cupid dashed into the cabin and seizing me with the force of a giant, dragged me on deck. At this moment the foremast fell with a tremendous crash, and a heavy sea swept over the devoted vessel, carrying away the boat, all loose spars, and many of the crew; Cupid and I held on by the main rigging and were not swept away; but wave after wave succeeded each other with resistless fury, and in a few moments we were both struggling, half stunned and exhausted, in the abyss of waters, holding on convulsively to a large hen-coop, which had providentially been thrown between us.

"One wild shriek of despair reached my ear, after which nothing was heard but the tumultuous roar of the angry elements."

At this part of Ethelston's narrative, Lucy covered her face with her hands, as if she would thereby shut out the dreadful view, and in spite of all her struggle for self-command, a tear stole down her colourless cheek.

"It was, indeed, a fearful moment," he continued, "and yet I did not feel deserted by hope; I was prepared for death, I prayed fervently, and I felt that my prayer was not unheard; even then, in the strife of foaming sea and roaring blast, God sent the vision of an angel to comfort and sustain me! It wore the form of one who has ever dwelt in my thoughts by day, and in my dreams by night; who seemed as near to me then, as she does now that her gentle tears are flowing at this recital of my trials."

While speaking the last words, his low voice trembled until it fell into a whisper, and Lucy, overcome by her feeling, would have fallen from her chair, had not his ready arm supported her. A dead silenced reigned in the room, Aunt Mary wept aloud, and Colonel Brandon walked to the window to conceal his emotion. After a few minutes, as she turned again towards them; Ethelston, who still supported Lucy, beckoned him to approach, and addressing him in a tone of deep and earnest feeling, said,

"Colonel Brandon, my guardian, friend and benefactor; add yet this one to all your former *benefits, and my cup of gratitude* will be full indeed," as he spoke he took the unresisting hand of Lucy in his own; the Colonel looked inquiringly and affectionately at his daughter, who did not speak, but raised her tearful eyes to his, with an expression not to be misunderstood. Pressing their united hands between his own, and kissing Lucy's forehead he whispered,

"God bless you, my children:" after a pause he added, with a suppressed smile, "Ethelston shall finish his narrative presently;" and taking Aunt Mary's arm he left the room.

We will imitate the Colonel's discretion, and forbear to intrude upon the sacred quiet of a scene where the secret long-cherished love of two overflowing hearts was at length unreservedly interchanged; we need only say that ere the Colonel returned with Aunt Mary, after an absence of half an hour, Lucy's tears were dried, and her cheeks were suffused with a mantling blush, as she sprung into her father's arms, and held him in a long and silent embrace.

"Come, my child," said the Colonel, when he had returned her affectionate caress; "sit down, and let us hear the conclusion of Ethelston's adventures—we left him in a perilous plight, and I am anxious to hear how he escaped from it."

"Not without much suffering, both of mind and body, my dear sir," continued Ethelston in a serious tone of voice; "for the sea dashed to an fro with such violence the frail basket-work to which Cupid and I were clinging, that more than once I was almost forced to quit my hold, and it was soon evident that its buoyant power was not sufficient to save us both, especially as Cupid's bulk and weight were commensurate with his gigantic strength; his coolness under these trying circumstances was remarkable; observing that I was almost fainting from the effects of a severe blow on the head from a floating piece of the wreck, he poured into my mouth some rum from a small flask that he had contrived to secure, and then replacing the stopper, thrust the flask into my breast pocket, saying, "Capt'n drink more when he want:" at this moment a large spar from the wreck was driven past us, and the faithful creature said, "Capt'n, hencoop not big enough for two Cupid swim and take spar to ride;" and ere I could stop him he loosed his hold and plunged into the huge wave to seize the spar; more I could not see, for the spray dashed over me, and the gloom and the breakers hid him in a moment from my sight. I felt my strength failing, but enough remained for me to loose a strong silk kerchief from my neck, and to lash myself firmly to the hencoop; again and again the wild sea broke over me: I felt a tremendous and stunning blow—as I thought, the last, and I was no more conscious of what passed around.

"When I recoverd my senses I found myself lying upon some soft branches, and sheltered by low bushes, a few hundred yards from the sea-beach; two strange men were standing near me, and gave evident signs of satisfaction when they saw my first attempts at speech and motion; they made me swallow several morsels of sea biscuit steeped in rum, and I was soon so far restored as to be able to sit up, and to

earn the particulars of my situation. The island near which the brig had been wrecked, was one of the Tortugas; the two men who had carried me up to a dry spot from the beach, belonged to a small fishing-craft, which had put in two days before the hurricane for a supply of water, and in hopes of catching turtle. Their vessel was securely moored in a little natural harbour, protected by the outer ledge of rocks; the reef on which the brig had struck was upward of a mile from the spot where they had found me, and I could not learn from them that they had seen any portion of her wreck, or any part of her crew alive or dead.

"As soon as my bruised condition permitted me to drag my limbs along, I commenced a careful search along the low rocky shore, in hopes of learning something of the fate of Cupid, and at length was horrified on discovering the mutilated remains of the faithful creature, among some crevices in the rocks. He had clung to the spar which still lay beside him with the pertinacious strength of despair; his hands and limbs were dreadfully mangled, and his skull fractured by the violence with which he had been driven on the reef. I remembered how he had resigned the hencoop to save my life; and the grief that I evinced for his loss moved the compassion of the fisherman, who aided me to bury him decently on the island.

"We remained there two days longer, until the gale had subsided, during which time I frequently visited poor Cupid's grave; and though many of our countrymen would be ashamed of owning such regret for one of his colour, I confess that when on that lonely spot I called to mind his faithful services, and his last noble act of generous courage, I mourned him as a friend and brother.

"When the fishing-smack put to sea, I prevailed on her captain to visit the reef where the brig had struck, but we found not a spar nor plank remaining; nor am I to this moment aware whether any others of her crew survived the wreck, but it is more than probable that they perished to a man. Upon the promise of a considerable sum of money, I prevailed upon the fisherman to give me a passage to New-Orleans, where we arrived without accident or adventure, and my impatience to reach home only permitted me to stay in that city a few hours, when, having provided myself with a horse, I rode on hither by forced marches, and arrived in the travel-worn condition that you observed yesterday."

CHAPTER XXII.

An Elk-hunt.—Reginald makes his first essay in surgery.—The reader is admitted into Prairie-Bird's tent.

We left Reginald Brandon in the skirt of the forest bounding the Western Prairie, accompanied by Wingenund and War-Eagle. The latter, having taken the lead, conducted his companions through a considerable extent of ground, covered with bushes of alder and scrub-oak, until they reached an open forest glade, where the Indian pointed out to Reginald a large square building, composed of rough logs, and covered with the same material. In the centre of one side was a low aperture or door, about fifteen inches in height, in front of which was a train of maize laid by Wingenund; on approaching this turkey-pen, or trap, they observed that there were already two prisoners, a large gobbler and a female bird, although not more than an hour had elapsed since the lad had taken out the four turkeys which have been before mentioned. When the captives became aware of the approach of the party, they ran about the pen from side to side, thrusting out their long necks, peering through the crevices in the logs, jumping and flying against the top, in their violent endeavours to escape.

"Do they never stoop their heads," inquired Reginald, "and go out at the same door by which they entered?"

"Never," replied Wingenund.

"That is singular," said Reginald, "for the bird is in general very sagacious and difficult to be taken or killed;—how does it happen that they are so unaccountably stupid as not to go out where they came in?"

Before answering the question addressed to him, Wingenund cast a diffident look towards War-Eagle, and on receiving from the chief a sign to reply, he said,

"Netis knows that the Great Spirit distributes the gifts of wisdom and cunning like the sunshine and the storm, even the Black-Father does not understand all his ways. How can Wingenund tell why the turkey's eye is so quick, his ear so sharp, his legs so swift?—and yet he is sometimes a fool; when he picks up the maize, his head is low; he walks through the opening; he is in a strange place; he is frightened; and fear takes from him all the sense that the Great Spirit had given him. Wingenund knows no more."

"My young brother speaks truly and wisely beyond his years," said Reginald, kindly. "It is as you say, fear makes him forget all the capacities of his nature; it is so with men—why should it be otherwise with birds? Does War-Eagle say nothing?"

"My brother's words are true," replied the chief, gravely; "he has picked out one arrow, but many remain in the quiver."

"My brother speaks riddles," said Reginald. "I do not understand him."

"Fear is a bad spirit," replied the chief, raising his arm and speaking with energy. "It creeps round the heart of a woman, and crawls among the lodges of the Dacotahs; it makes the deer leap into the river when he would be safer in the thicket; it makes the turkey a fool and keeps him in the pen: but there are other bad spirits that make the heart crooked and the eyes blind."

"Tell me, how so?" inquired Reginald, desirous of encouraging his Indian friend to continue his illustration.

"Does my brother know the antelope," replied War-Eagle; "he is very cunning and swift; his eye is quick as the turkey's; the hunter could not overtake him: but he lies down in a hollow and hides himself; he fastens a tuft of grass to his bow and holds it over his head; the Bad Spirit gets into the antelope; he becomes a fool; he comes nearer and nearer to look at the strange sight;—the hunter shoots and he dies. There are many bad spirits. The

Wyandot who struck at my white brother, he was a cunning snake; he had taken scalps, the ball of his rifle did not wander; if he had crept in the bushes on my brother's path, Netis would now be in the happy hunting-fields of the white warriors. But a Bad Spirit took him; he offered food while his heart was false, and he thrust his head under the tomahawk of War-Eagle. There are many bad spirits. I have spoken."

Reginald listened with interest to these sentiments of his Indian friend, expressed, as they were, in broken sentences and in broken English, the purport of them being, however, exactly conveyed in the foregoing sentences; but he refrained from pursuing the subject farther, observing that War-Eagle was slinging the turkeys over Wingenund's shoulder, and preparing to pursue their course in search of the elk. Leaving the youth to return with his feathered burden to the encampment, the two friends continued their excursion, War-Eagle leading the way, and stopping every now and then to examine such tracks as appeared to him worthy of notice. They had not proceeded far, when they reached a spot where the path which they were following crossed a small rivulet, and, the soil being soft on its bank, there were numerous hoof-prints of deer and elk, but so confused by the trampling of the different animals, that Reginald could not distinguish the one from the other. It was not so, however, with the Indian, for pointing downward to a track at his foot, he made a sign, by raising both his hands above his head, to indicate a pair of antlers, and whispered to Reginald "very big."

"An elk?" inquired the latter; making a silent affirmative sign, War-Eagle pursued the trail which conducted them to the top of a small rising ground, where it appeared to branch in several directions and became almost imperceptible from the shortness of the grass and the hardness of the soil. But these seemed to offer no impediment to the Indian's pursuit of his quarry, for turning short at a right angle to their former course, he descended the hillock in a different direction, walking with a swift noiseless step as if he saw his game before him.

Reginald's surprise overcame even his eagerness for the sport, trained as he had been in the woods, and justly held one of the quickest and most skilful hunters in the territory; he had looked in vain on the ground which they were now traversing for the slightest point or footmark; touching, therefore, his friend lightly on his shoulder, he whispered, "Does my brother guess the elk's path!—or can he smell it like the Spaniard's dog?"

A good-humoured smile played on the Delaware's lip as he replied, "The trail of the elk is broad and easy; War-Eagle could follow it by the moon's light! My white brother will see; he is an elk chief; his squaws are with him."

As he spoke he showed several marks which Reginald could scarcely distinguish on the short grass; a few yards farther War-Eagle added, pointing to a low bush beside them, "If Netis does not see the elk's foot, he can see his teeth."

On examining the bush Reginald perceived that a small fresh twig from the side of it had been recently cropped, and suppressing his astonishment at his friend's sagacity, in following with such apparent ease a trail that to him was scarcely discernible, he allowed him to proceed without farther interruption, closely watching his every movement, in the hope that he might be able to discover some of the indications by which the Indian was guided. Moving lightly forward, they soon had occasion again to cross the brook before mentioned; and on the soft edge of its banks, War-Eagle pointed in silence to the track of the large hoof of the elk, and to the smaller print left by the feet of its female companions. Desiring Reginald to remain still, the Indian now crept stealthily forward to the top of a small hillock covered with brushwood, where he lay for a few seconds with his ear touching the ground. Having once raised his head to look through a low bush in front of him, he sank again upon the ground, and made a signal for his friend to creep to the spot. Reginald obeyed, and peering cautiously through the leaves of the same bush, he saw the stately elk browsing at a distance of a hundred and fifty yards, the two hinds being beyond him; the intervening ground being barren and almost flat, offering no cover for a nearer approach, his first impulse was to raise his rifle for a distant shot; but War-Eagle, gently pressing down the barrel, motioned him to crouch behind the bush. When they were again concealed, the Delaware whispered to his friend, that he would go round and creep on the elk from the opposite quarter.

Reginald in reply pointed to the top branches of a young poplar gently waving in the breeze.

"War-Eagle knows it," said the Indian gravely, "the wind is from that quarter; it is not good; but he will try; if elk smell him, he comes this way, and Netis shoot him." So saying, he crept down the little hillock by the same path which they had followed in the ascent, and then striking off in an oblique direction was soon lost to view.

Reginald, still concealed behind the bush, silent and motionless, with his hand on the lock of his rifle, watched intently every movement of the antlered monarch of the woods; the lattar, unconscious of danger, lazily picked the tenderest shoots from the surrounding bushes, or tossed his lofty head to and fro, as if to display the ease and grace with which it bore those enormous antlers. More than once, as he turned to brush off from his side some troublesome fly, Reginald thought he had become suddenly aware of the Indian's approach; but it was not so, for in spite of the disadvantage of the wind, the practised Delaware moved towards his unsuspecting prey with the stealthy creep of a panther. Reginald's impatience was such that minutes seemed to him hours; and his fingers played with the lock of his rifle, as if he could no longer control their movement; at length a sudden snort from one of the hinds announced that she smelt or heard some object of alarm as she came trotting to the side of her lordly protector.

Turning himself to windward, and throwing forward his ears, the elk listened for a moment, while his upturned and wide distended nostrils snuffed the breeze, to discover the danger of which he had been warned by his mate. That moment was not lost by the Delaware, and the report of his rifle echoed through the forest. Tossing his head with a sudden start the elk fled from his now discovered foe, and was

bounding over the barren space in front of the bush where Reginald was concealed. With a coolness that did great credit to his nerves as a hunter, the latter remained motionless, with his eye on the game and his finger on the trigger, until the elk passed his station at speed; then he fired, and with so true an aim, that ere it had gone fifty yards, the noble beast fell to the earth, and immediately Reginald's hunting knife put an end to its pain and to its life. The young man looked over the quarry with pride and pleasure, for it was the largest he had ever seen; and the shot (which had pierced the heart) was well calculated to raise War-Eagle's opinion of his skill in wood-craft. While he was still contemplating the animal's bulk and fine proportions, the exclamation "good!" uttered in English, gave him the first notice that the Delaware was at his side.

"Ha! my friend," said Reginald, grasping his hand cordially; "you sent him down towards me in fine style. Tell me, War-Eagle, are there many elks as large in this country?"

"Not many," replied the Indian; "War-Eagle told his white brother that the elk's foot on the trail was big."

"Was my brother very far when he shot?" inquired Reginald; "when his rifle speaks, the ball does not wander in the air."

"War-Eagle was far," replied the Indian, quietly, "but the elk carries the mark of his rifle—Netis shot better;" on examination, it appeared that the chief was right. His bullet had passed through the fleshy part of the animal's neck, but not having cut the wind-pipe, the wound was not mortal, and but little blood had flowed from it.

While the Indian was busied in skinning and cutting up the elk, Reginald amused himself by reconnoitring the ground over which his friend had crept before he shot, and he was struck by the extraordinary sagacity with which the latter had made his approach; for on that side there were but few and scattered bushes, nor was there any rugged or broken ground favourable for concealment.

When the choicest portions of meat were duly separated and enveloped in the skin, War-Eagle hung them up on an adjacent tree, carefully rubbing damp powder over the covering, to protect the meat from the wolves and carrion birds; after which the friends proceeded on their excursion.

Having found fresh tracks of elk leading towards the open prairie, they followed them, and succeeded in killing two more, after which they returned to the encampment, whence War-Eagle despatched a young Indian with a horse, and with directions as to the locality of the meat, which he was instructed to bring home.

As Reginald walked through the lodges of the Osage village, he observed a crowd of Indians collected before one of them, and curiosity prompted him to turn aside and observe what might be passing. Making his way without difficulty through the outer circle of spectators, he found himself before a lodge, in front of which a wounded boy of twelve or fourteen years of age, was extended on a buffalo-robe. On inquiry, Reginald learned from an Indian who could speak a few words of English, that the lad had been struck down and trampled on by a vicious horse; although no sound escaped from his lips, the involuntary writhing of the youthful sufferer showed the acuteness of the pain which he endured; while a bulky Indian, in the garb of an Osage Medicine-man, was displaying beside him the various absurd mummeries of his vocation.

This native quack was naked to the waist; his breast and back being painted over with representations of snakes and lizards. Instead of the usual breech-cloth, or middle garment, he wore a kind of apron of antelope skins, hemmed, or skirted with feathers of various colours: the borders of his leggings were also adorned with the wings of an owl; in one hand he held a tomahawk, the haft of which was painted white, and in the other a hollow gourd containing a few hard beans, or stones of the wild cherry, which latter instrument he rattled incessantly round the head of his patient, accompanying this Æsculapian music with the most grotesque gesticulations, and a sort of moaning howl—all these being intended to exorcise and drive away the evil spirit of pain.

While Reginald was contemplating the strange spectacle with mingled curiosity and compassion, he heard a confused murmur among those Indians nearest to the corner of the lodge, and thought he could distinguish the name of Olitipa; nor was he mistaken, for almost immediately afterwards the crowd divided, and Prairie-bird appeared before the lodge. Her dress was the same as that in which Reginald had before seen her, excepting that, in place of the chaplet of wild flowers, she wore on her head a turban of party-coloured silk, the picturesque effect of which, blending with her dark hair and the oriental character of her beauty, reminded our hero of those Circassian enchantresses whom he had read of in eastern fable, as ruling satrap or sultan, with a power more despotic than his own!

Prairie-bird, walking gently forward with modest self-possession, took her place by the side of the sufferer, as if unconscious of the numerous eyes that were observing all her movements; the Medicine-man, whose exorcisms had been hitherto attended with no success, retreated into the lodge, whence he narrowly and silently observed the proceedings of his fair rival in the healing art.

It was not difficult for Prairie-bird to ascertain that the boy's hurts were very serious, for the hot brow, the dry lip, the involuntary contortions of the frame, gave clear evidence of acute pain and fever. She deeply regretted that the Missionary had been absent when she was summoned, as his assistance would have been most useful, nevertheless, she resolved to do all in her power towards the mitigation of sufferings, the cure of which seemed beyond the reach of her simple remedies. Opening a bag that hung at her girdle, she drew from it some linen bandage, and various salves and simples, together with a small case of instruments belonging to Paul Muller, and kneeling by her young patient's side, she breathed a short, but earnest prayer for the blessing of Heaven on her humble exertions. During this pause, the Indians observed a strict and attentive silence; and Reginald felt a kind of awe mingle itself with his impassioned admiration as he contemplated the unaffected simplicity and loveliness of her kneeling figure.

A serious wound in the young patient's temple claimed her first care, which having washed and closed, she covered with a healing plaster, but observing that the symptoms of fever had rather increased than diminished, she knew that the lancet should be immediately applied, and cast her anxious eyes around in the hope that the misionary might have heard of the accident, and be now on his way to the lodge. While looking thus around, she became for the first time aware of Reginald's presence, and a slight blush accompanied her recognition of him; but her thoughts recurring immediately to the object of her present attention, she asked him in a clear low voice to come nearer, on which he moved forward from the circle of spectators, and stood before the lodge.

Prairie-bird, pointing to the form of the young Indian, said in English, "The poor boy is much hurt, he will die if he is not bled; the Black Father is absent; can Reginald take blood from the arm?"

"I do not pretend to much skill in surgery, fair Prairie-bird," replied the young man, smiling; "but I have learned to bleed my horse and my dog, and if the necessity be urgent, methinks I can open a vein in this boy's arm without much risk of danger."

"It is indeed urgent," said the maiden, earnestly; "here are Paul Müller's instruments; I pray you take a lancet and proceed without delay."

Thus urged, Reginald selected a lancet, and having proved its sharpness, he passed a bandage tightly round the sufferer's arm, and set about his first surgical operation with becoming care and gravity, the Osages drawing near and looking on in attentive silence. Before applying the lancet, he said in a low voice to Prairie-bird, "Must I allow a considerable quantity of blood to flow 'ere I staunch it?" and on her making an affirmative sign, he added, "Let me entreat you to turn your eyes away, it is not a fitting sight for them, and they might affect the steadiness of my nerves."

With a deep blush Prairie-bird cast down her eyes, and began to employ them busily in searching her little bag for some cordial drinks and healing ointment, to be administered after the bleeding should be over.

Reginald acquitted himself of his task with skill and with complete success, and found no difficulty in staunching the blood, and placing a proper bandage on the arm; after which the restoratives prepared by Prairie-bird were applied, and in a very short time they had the satisfaction of finding the symptoms of fever and pain subside, and were able to leave the youthful patient to repose, Prairie-bird promising to visit him again on the morrow.

An elderly brave of the Osages now stepped forward, and presented Prairie-bird with a girdle of cloth, ornamented with feathers, quills, and beads of the gayest colours, an offering which she received with that modest grace which was inseparable from her every movement; the same brave (who was, in fact, the father of the wounded boy), presented Reginald with a painted buffalo robe, which, as soon as he had displayed its strange designs and devices, he desired a young Indian to convey to the *white chief's lodge*. Our hero having, in return, given to the Osage a knife with an ornamented sheath, which he had worn, in addition to his own, in case of being suddenly called upon to make such a present, prepared to accompany Prairie-bird to her lodge.

As they left the circle, Reginald's eye encountered that of Mahéga, fixed with a scowling expression on himself and his fair companion, but he passed on without noticing the sullen and haughty chief, being resolved not to involve himself in any quarrel in her presence. They walked slowly towards the lodge of Tamenund, and it must be confessed that they did not take exactly the shortest path to it, Reginald leading the way, and Prairie-bird following his occasional deviations with marvellous acquiescence.

The young man turned the conversation on the character of Paul Müller, knowing it to be a subject agreeable to Prairie-bird, and well calculated to give him an opportunity of listening to that voice which was already music to his ear; nor was he disappointed, for she spoke of him with all the warmth of the most affectionate regard; and the expression of her feelings imparted such eloquence to her tongue and to her beaming eyes, that Reginald looked and listened in enraptured silence. As they drew near her tent, she suddenly checked herself, and looking up in his face with an archness that was irresistible, said, "Pray pardon me, I have been talking all this time, when I ought to have been listening to you, who are so much wiser than myself."

"Say not so," replied Reginald, with an earnestness that he attempted not to conceal, "say not so, I only regret that we have already reached your tent, for I should never be weary of listening to your voice."

Prairie-bird replied with that ingenuous simplicity peculiar to her:

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I know you speak the truth, and it makes me very happy to give you pleasure; now I must go into my tent."

So saying she held out her hand to him, and nothing but the presence of several Indians loitering near, prevented his obeying the impulse which prompted him to press it to his lips; checking it by an effort of prudence, he withdrew into the lodge of Tamenund, and mused on the qualities of this extraordinary child of the wilderness, her beauty, her grace, her dignity, and above all, that guileless simplicity that distinguished her beyond all that he had ever seen; in short, he mused so long on the subject that we will leave him to his meditations, as we fear it must be confessed that he was almost, if not quite, "in love," and the reflections of parties so circumstanced, are rarely interesting to others.

What were the feelings of Prairie-bird when she once more found herself alone in her tent, and vainly endeavoured to still the unwonted tumult in her heart? Her thoughts, in spite of herself, would dwell on the companion who had escorted her from the Osage lodge; his words still rang in her ears; his image was before her eyes; she felt ashamed that one, almost a stranger, should thus absorb all her faculties, and was the more ashamed from being conscious that she did not wish it were otherwise;

her heart told her that it would not exchange its present state of tumult and subjection for its former condition of quiet and peace!

Lest the reader should be inclined to judge her as harshly as she judged herself, we will beg him to remember the circumstances and history of this singular girl. Brought up among a roving tribe of Indians, she had fortunately fallen into the hands of a family remarkable for the highest virtues exhibited by that people; the missionary, Paul Müller, had cultivated her understanding with the most affectionate and zealous care; and he was, with the exception of an occasional trader visiting the tribe, almost the only man of her own race whom she had seen; and though entertaining towards Tamenund the gratitude which his kindness to her deserved, and towards War-Eagle and Wingenund the affectionate regard of a sister, both the knowledge imparted by the missionary, and her own instinctive feeling had taught her to consider herself among them as a separate and isolated being. These feelings she had of course nourished in secret, but they had not altogether escaped the penetration of Wingenund, who, it may be remembered, had told Reginald on their first meeting that the antelope was as likely to pair with the elk, as was his sister to choose a mate among the chiefs of the Osage or the Lenape.

On the return of the two Delawares from their excursion to the Muskingum, Wingenund had related to Prairie-bird the heroic gallantry with which the young white chief had plunged into the river to save War-Eagle's life; he had painted, with untutored but impassioned eloquence, the courage, the gentleness, the generosity, of his new friend. Prairie-bird's own imagination had filled up the picture, and the unseen preserver of her Indian brother was therein associated with all the highest qualities that adorned the heroes of such tales as she had read or heard recounted by the missionary.

She had reached that age when the female heart, unsupported by maternal protection, and severed from the ties of kindred, naturally seeks for something on which to rest its affection. Are we then to wonder if, when Reginald Brandon first stood before her, when she saw in his noble form and expressive features all her secret imaginations more than realized, when he addressed her in her own tongue, and in a tone of voice gentle even to tenderness; are we to wonder, or to blame, this nursling of the wilderness, if the barriers of pride and reserve gave way beneath the flood which swept over them with fresh and irresistible force? Often had she, on various pretexts, made Wingenund repeat to her the adventures and occurrences of his excursion to the Ohio; and as the artless boy described, in language as clear as his memory was tenacious, the dwelling of Reginald's father, the range of buildings, the strange furniture, the garden, the winding brook that bounded its enclosure, and above all the fair features and winning gentleness of the Lily of Mooshanne, Prairie-bird would cover her averted face with her hands, as if struggling to banish or to recal some wild delusive dream, and her lips would move in unconscious repetition of "Mooshanne.' Surprised at her agitation, Wingenund had once so far laid aside the strictness of Indian reserve as to inquire into its cause, and she replied, with a melancholy smile,

"Wingenund has painted the Lily of Mooshanne in colours so soft and sweet, that Olitipa longs to embrace and love her as a sister."

The boy fixed his penetrating eye upon her countenance, in deep expressive silence, but the innate delicacy of his feeling triumphed, and Prairie-bird's secret meditations were thence forward undisturbed.

To return from this retrospective digression Prairie-bird's tent was divided, by a partition of buffalo skins, into two compartments, in the outer of which were her guitar, the books lent her by the missionary, a small table and two chairs or rather stools, the latter rudely but efficiently constructed by his own hands; in the corner also stood the chest, where his medicines, instruments, and other few valuables were deposited; in the inner compartment was a bed, composed of Mexican grass, stretched upon four wooden feet, and covered with dressed antelope skins and blankets of the finest quality. Here also was a chest containing her quaint but not ungraceful apparel, and the other requisites for her simple toilet; at night a female slave, a captive taken from one of the southern tribes, slept in the outer compartment, and the ever watchful Wingenund stretched himself on a buffalo robe across the aperture, so that the slumbers of the fair Prairie-bird were securely guarded even during the absence of Paul Müller; and when he was with the tribe, his small tent was separated from hers only by a partition of skins, which in case of alarm might be cut open by a sharp knife in a moment. There was, in truth, little fear for the security of this extraordinary girl, who was looked upon, as we have before observed, by all the tribe with mingled awe and affection.

In the outer of the two compartments abovementioned she was now sitting, with her eyes cast upon the ground, and her fingers straying unconsciously over the strings of her guitar, when she was aroused from her long reverie by the soft voice of the female slave who had entered unperceived, and who now said in the Delaware tongue,

"Are Olitipa's ears shut, and is the voice of Wingenund strange to them?"

"Is my brother there?" replied the maiden, ashamed at her fit of absence; "tell him, Lita, that he is welcome."

The girl addressed by the name of Lita was about seventeen years of age, small, and delicately formed, exceedingly dark, her wild and changeful countenance being rather of a gipsy than of an Indian character. She had been taken, when a child, by a war-party which had penetrated into the country of the Comanches, a powerful and warlike tribe still inhabiting the extensive prairies on the Mexican and Texian frontier. She was devotedly attached to Prairie-bird, who treated her more like a friend than a slave, but towards all others she observed a habitual and somewhat haughty silence; had her fate condemned her to any other lodge in the encampment, the poor girl's life would have been a continued succession of blows, labour, and suffering; for her spirit was indomitable, and impracticable to every other control than kindness; but as the good-humoured Ta-

menund had appropriated her services to his favourite child, she passed most of her time in Olitipa's tent, and thus avoided the ill-usage to which she might otherwise have been exposed.

Such was the girl who now went to the folding aperture of the tent, and desired Wingenund to come in. The youth entered, followed by a boy bearing a large covered dish or basket of wicker-work, which having placed on the table, he withdrew. Prairie-bird could not fail to observe in her young brother's countenance and carriage an unusual stateliness and dignity, and she remarked at the same time, the circumstance of his having brought with him the boy to carry her basket, a service which he had been accustomed to perform with his own hands. Making him a sign to sit down, she thus accosted him in terms allusive to the customs of the tribe:—

"Has my young brother dreamed? has the breath of the Great Spirit passed over his sleep?"

"It is so," replied Wingenund. "The chiefs and the braves have sat at the council-fire; the name of Wingenund was on their tongues, the deeds of his fathers are not forgotten; he is not to do the work of squaws; his name will be heard among the warriors of the Lenape."

From this reply Prairie-bird knew that her young brother was about to undergo the fasting and other superstitious ordeals, through which those youths were made to pass who wished to be enrolled among the warriors of the tribe at an earlier age than usual; these superstitious obervances were repugnant to her good sense and enlightened understanding, and as she had hitherto acted in the capacity of monitress and instructress, she was perhaps not pleased at the prospect of his suddenly breaking loose from her gentle dominion; she said to him, therefore, in a tone more grave than usual:

"Wingenund has heard the Black-Father speak; were his ears shut? does he not know that there is one God above, who rules the world alone! the totems,* and the symbols, and the dreams of the medicine-men, are for those poor Indians whose minds are under a cloud. Wingenund cannot believe these things!"

"My sister speaks wisely," replied the youth; "the wind cannot blow away her words; but Wingenund is of the Lenape, the ancient people; he wishes to live and die among their braves; he must travel in the path that his fathers have trod, or the warriors will not call his name when the hatchet is dug up."

"Let not the hatchet be dug up," said the maiden, anxiously. "Have I not told my brother that God is the avenger of blood spilt by man? why should his foot be set on the war-path?"

"While the hatchet is below the earth," replied the youth, in the low, musical accent of his tribe, "Wingenund will sit by his sister and listen to her wisdom; he will go out with War-Eagle and bring back the skin of the antelope or the doe for her apparel, the meat of the deer and the bison for her food; he will open his ears to the counsel of the Black-Father, and will throw a thick blanket over thoughts of strife and blood. But if the Washashee" (the Osage) "bears a forked tongue," (here the youth sank his voice to a whisper of deep meaning,) "if he loosens the scalp-knife while his hand is on the poacan,* if the trail of the Dahcotah is found near our village, Wingenund must be awake; he is not a child; the young men will hear his voice, and the old men shall say "He is the son of his father." It is enough; let my sister eat the meat that War-Eagle has sent her; for three suns Wingenund tastes not food."

So saying, the lad threw his robe over his shoulder and left the tent. Prairie-bird gazed long and thoughtfully on the spot where her brother's retreating figure had disappeared; she felt grieved that all the lessons and truths of Christianity which she had endeavoured to instil into his mind, were unable to change the current of his Indian blood; she had hoped to see him become a civilized man and a convert, and through his amiable character, and the weight of his name, to win over many others of the Lenape tribe; in addition to this disappointment, she was alarmed at the purport of his parting words; he had hinted at some treachery on the part of their Osage allies, and that a trail of the Dahcotahs had been seen near the encampment. These subjects of anxiety, added to the excitement which her feelings had lately undergone, so completely engrossed the maiden's attention, that, although the corn-cakes were of the sweetest kind, and the venison of the most delicate flavour, the basket of provisions remained untouched on the table when Paul Müller entered the tent.

His brow was grave and thoughtful, but his countenance relaxed into its usual benevolent expression, as his affectionate pupil sprang forward to greet and welcome him.

"Dear father, I am so glad you are come!" she exclaimed; "I have been waiting for you most impatiently, and I have been in need of your aid."

"I heard, my child, as I walked through the village, that you had been tending the wounds of a boy much hurt by a horse; was the hurt beyond your skill?"

"Not exactly," she replied, hesitating. "It was needful that blood should flow from his arm, and, as you were not there, I was forced to ask the assistance of Netis—that is, of Reginald."

"Well," said the missionary, smiling, "I hope he proved a skilful leech?"

"He would not allow me to look on," she replied; "but, though it was his first trial, he drew the blood and staunched it as skilfully as you could have done it yourself, and then he walked with me to the tent."

"And you conversed much by the way," enquired the missionary.

"Oh yes; and he made me tell him a great deal about you, and I was ashamed of talking so much; but then he told me that it gave him pleasure to hear me talk. How can it please him to hear me talk, dear father? I know nothing, and he has seen and read so much."

* Every warrior belonging to the Lenape, Saukee, and all the branches of the great Chippewyan tribe, believes himself to be under the mysterious guardianship of some spirit, usually represented under the form of an animal. This is called his "totem," and is held sacred by him; thus, a warrior whose totem is a tortoise, or a wolf, or *even a snake, will cautiously abstain from injuring or killing one of those animals*

* Anglice "the pipe"

Paul Müller averted his face for a moment to conceal from her the smile which he could scarcely repress, as he replied,

"My child, he has perhaps seen and read much, but the life and habits of the Indians are new to him, and of these you can tell him many things that he does not know."

"Tell me, dear father," she said, after a short silence, "are there others like him in my country? I mean, not exactly like him, but more like him than the traders whom I have seen; they are so rough, and they drink fire-water, and they never think of God or his mercies; but he is so noble, his countenance made me afraid at first, but now, when he speaks to me, his voice is as gentle as the fawn calling to its dam!"

Paul Müller saw very well how it fared with the heart of Prairie-bird; he remembered that Reginald was the son of a wealthy proprietor, who would probably have insuperable objections to his son's marrying a foundling of the wilderness, and he hesitated whether he should not give her some warning caution on a subject which he foresaw would so soon affect her peace of mind; on the other hand, he was convinced that Reginald was a man of generous and decided character, and, while he resolved carefully to observe the intercourse between them, he would not mar the unsuspecting purity of her nature, nor throw any obstacle in the way of an attachment which he believed might lead to the happiness of both parties. In coming to this conclusion, it must not be forgotten that he was a Moravian missionary, long resident in the Far-west, and, therefore, not likely to trouble his head with the nice distinctions of European aristocracy. In the country which was now his home, he might be justified in deeming a match equal, if the man were honest and brave and the bride young and virtuous, without reference to their birth, connexions, or worldly possessions. Under the impression of considerations like these, the missionary replied to the maiden's enquiry:

"My child, I will not say that among the cities and settlements of the white men, there are many who would gain by comparison with Reginald Brandon, for not only has he the accidental advantages of fine features, and a form singularly graceful and athletic, but he seems to me to possess the far higher and rarer qualities of a modest, generous mind, and an honest heart: nevertheless, my child, I will pray you even in respect to him, not to forget what I have told you regarding the general infirmity and waywardness of our nature, keep a watch on your eyes and on your heart, and Providence will rule all for the best:—we will speak no more on this subject now; let us take some food from the basket on your table." Prairie-bird spread the simple meal in thoughtful silence, and when the missionary had asked a blessing on it, they sat down together. After a pause of some minutes she communicated to him her anxiety on account of the hints dropped by Wingenund respecting the suspected treachery of some of their Osage allies, and the circumstance of a hostile trail having been discovered near the encampment. "It is too true," replied the missionary gravely; "there are signs of approaching strife; and even that boy, whom I have so long endeavoured to instruct and lead aright, his blood is beginning to boil. I fear it is almost as hard for an Indian to change his nature as an Ethiopian his skin. He has told you the truth, and we must be prepared for approaching trouble."

After musing for a few moments, Paul Müller, fixing his eye on Prairie-bird, continued: "Do you know any cause of quarrel between the Osage and Lenape chiefs?"

"None," replied the maiden in unaffected surprise. "How should I know? I go not near their council-fire."

"True," said the missionary; "but your eyes are not often shut in broad day. Have you spoken to Mahega of late? have you observed him?"

"He has spoken to me more than once, and often meets me on my return from any far lodge in the village. I do not like him; he is fierce and bad, and he beats his young squaw, Wetopa."

"You are right, my child; avoid him; there is evil in that man; but if you meet him, do not show any dislike or suspicion of him; you would only kindle strife; you are among faithful and watchful friends, and if they were all to slumber and sleep, you have a Friend above, whose eye is never closed, and whose faithfulness is everlasting. Farewell, my child. I must converse awhile with Tamenund. Do you solace an hour with your guitar; it will put your unquiet thoughts to rest."

Prairie-bird was so accustomed to pay implicit obedience to the slightest wishes and suggestions of her beloved preceptor, that as he left the tent she mechanically took up the guitar, and passed her fingers through the strings. By degrees the soul of music within her was stirred, and ere long vented itself in the following hymn

The words were in the Delaware tongue, and composed by herself,—the melodies (for more than one were introduced into the irregular chaunt) were such as she had caught or mingled from Indian minstrelsy, and the whole owed its only attraction to the sweet and varied tones of her voice. The first measure was a low recitative which might be thus rendered in English:—

"The sun sinks behind the western hills,
Deep red are the curtains of his couch
One by one the stars appear;
Many they are and lustrous.
The pale moon is among them!
They walk in their appointed path,
Singing on their way, 'God made us all!
Machelenda sutch Ktelewunsoacan,
or
Hallowed be thy name."

Here the measure changed, and sweeping the strings with a bolder hand, she continued her untutored hymn, blending her Christian creed with the figures and expressions of the people among whom she dwelt.

"The Great Spirit of the Lenape is God.
He has sent his word to gladden the heart of man,
But clouds still darken the minds of the ancient people
The Great Spirit knows that they are blind and deaf,
Yet His ear is open to hear,
His hand is ready to guide.
(*ut supra*)
Hallowed be thy name!"

Again the measure changed, as in the richest tones of her melodious voice she pursued her theme.

'Sion and the everlasting mountains are thy footstool!
Lightnings are about thy throne.
Thunder is thy voice,
And the evil spirit trembles before thee!
The eagle cannot soar to thy habitation;
His eye cannot look on thy brightness;
Yet dost thou give life to the insect,
And breath to the merry wren!
Thou leadest the wild horse to the pasture,
And the thirsty fawn to the stream.
Hallowed be thy name."

Here the measure resumed its low and plaintive melody as she thus concluded her song.

Who sings the praise of God?
It is 'Prairie-bird,' the poor child of the wilderness.
But God spurns not her prayer;
She is a stray-leaf, that knows not the tree
Whence the rude wind hath blown it;
But God planted the parent stem,
And not a branch or leaf thereof is hid from his sight.
The young whip-poor-will flies to its mother's nest,
The calf bleats to the bison-cow:
No mother's voice says to Ollipa, 'Come here!'
The wide prairie is her home!
God is a Father to Ollipa!
Hallowed be thy name!"

In singing the last few words, the tones of her voice were "most musical, most melancholy," and though no human eye marked the teardrop that stole down her cheek, it would appear that her song had excited sympathy in some human bosom, for a deep sigh fell upon her ear; startled at the sound, Prairie-bird looked round her tent, but no one could be seen; she listened, but it was not repeated, and the maiden remained unconscious that at the very first touch of her guitar Reginald had crept out of the adjoining lodge, and, enveloped in a buffalo robe on the grass at the back of her tent, had heard from beginning to end her plaintive hymn, and had paid the unconscious tribute of a heavy sigh to the touching pathos of its closing strain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Symptoms of a Rupture between the Delawares and Osages.—Mahéga comes forward in the Character of a Lover.—His Courtship receives an unexpected Interruption.

PAUL MULLER, having left the lodge of Prairie-bird, fulfilled his intention of entering that of Tamenund: he found the venerable chieftain seated upon a buffalo robe; his back leaned against a bale of cloth, a highly ornamented pipe-stem at his lips, while from its other extremity, a thin column of smoke rising in wavy folds, found its way out of the accidental rents and crevices in the skins which covered the lodge. War-Eagle was listening in an attitude of respectful attention to the words which fell from his father; but the subject of conversation was evidently of some importance, as the women and the youths were whispering together at a distance from the two principal persons. The entrance of the missionary was not unnoticed, for Tamenund made him a signal to draw near and sit down; several times the pipe was passed round in silence, when the old chief, addressing his guest in the Delaware tongue, said, "The Black Father knows that there are dark clouds in the sky!"

"He does," replied the missionary. A glance of intelligence passed between War-Eagle and Tamenund, as the latter proceeded.

"*What says the Black-Father? Is the storm to break, or will the sun shine again?*"

"*The Great Spirit only knows,*" replied the missionary; "if the sun shines, we will be thankful, if the storm falls, we will wrap round us the cloak of patience."

A fierce gleam shot from the young chief's eye, but he spoke not a word until Tamenund addressed him thus: "What says War-Eagle? let him speak."

"The snows of many winters are on my father's forehead; the Black-Father has learned wisdom from the Great Spirit; it is more fitting for War-Eagle to listen than to speak," replied the young man, curbing the angry thoughts that glowed in his breast.

"Nay, my son," said the missionary, "let War-Eagle speak, and his saying be afterwards weighed by the aged heads."

War-Eagle then proceeded to explain how Wingenund, in returning from the turkey-pen, had caught a glimpse of a distant figure, whom he knew at a glance to belong to another tribe. Hastily concealing himself among the bushes, he waited till the strange Indian passed, and then resolving to watch him, crept stealthily on his trail.

Having made his way to a hollow in the thickest part of the forest, he sat down on the stump of an alder-tree, where he made and twice repeated a low signal whistle, which was soon answered by another Indian, who approached in an opposite direction, and in whom, to his great surprise, Wingenund recognised Mahéga. He was not near enough to overhear their conversation, neither was he aware whether they spoke in the Delaware tongue, but after conversing in a low tone for some minutes, they separated, and Wingenund again put himself on the trail of the stranger; the latter frequently stopped in his course, looked round and listened, but the youth was too practised and sagacious to be baffled by these precautions, and finally succeeded in tracking the object of his pursuit to an encampment containing ten or a dozen armed Indians, whom he knew at once to form a war-party, but could not decide to what tribe they belonged; he succeeded, however, in securing a mocassin which one of them had dropped, and returned unperceived to the Delaware village.

Such was the outline of the occurrences now rapidly sketched by War-Eagle; and in concluding his narrative, he held up the mocassin above-mentioned, and presented it to the aged chief. The latter examined it for a moment in silence, and restoring it to the warrior, pronounced, in a low guttural tone, the word "Dahcotah."

"Yes," said the War-Eagle, in a deep whisper, indicative of the indignant passion that boiled within; "Yes, the Dahcotah is in the woods; he prowls like a prairie-wolf. The Great Spirit has made him a dog, and if he sets his foot on the hunting-ground of the Lenapé, let not his wife complain if she looks along his path in vain, and strikes her breast, saying, 'The wife of the Dahcotah is a widow!' but the Evil Spirit has crept into the heart of the Washashee, a snake is in the council-chamber of the Lenapé, and lies are on the tongue of Mahéga! Is it enough, or must War-Eagle speak more?"

"The words of my son are hard," replied Tamenund, shaking his head sorrowfully; "the Dahcotah are dogs, they are on a deer-hunt; their heart is not big enough to make them dig up the hatchet to fight with the Lenapé. Tamenund cannot believe that the tongue of Mahéga is so forked, or his heart so black, for two suns

have not passed since he sat and smoked in this lodge, and spoke of Olitipa, the daughter of the Prairie He said that her voice was music to him, that her form was in his dreams, and he asked Tamenund to give her to him as a wife."

At these words the suppressed rage of the youthful warrior had well nigh burst the iron bands of Indian self-control; he ground his teeth audibly together, his dilated form trembled through every nerve and muscle, but observing the keen eye of the missionary fixed upon his countenance, he subdued in a moment the rising tempest, and asked in a voice, the forced calmness of which was fearful, "What said my father?"

Tamenund replied that the maiden was great medicine in the tribe, that she was a gift of the Great Spirit, and that her dwelling could never be in the lodge of an Osage chief. "He went away without speaking," added the old man seriously; "but his eye spoke bad words enough!"

"My father said well," exclaimed the impetuous young man; "let Mahéga seek a wife among his dog-brothers the Dahcotahs! War-Eagle will smoke no more in his lodge."

After a brief pause, Tamenund continued,

"My son has told half his thoughts, let him speak on."

"Nay," returned the young warrior, "let my father consult the medicine, and the counsellors who have seen many winters: War-Eagle will whisper to his braves, and when the ancient men in council have spoken, he will be ready."

With this ambiguous answer, he folded his buffalo robe over his shoulder and left the lodge.

The missionary saw that mischief was brewing, yet knew not how to prevent it. He had gained extraordinary influence among the Delawares by never interfering in their councils, unless when he felt assured that the result would justify the advice which he offered, but on the present occasion it was evident that his Indian friends had sufficient grounds for suspecting their Osage allies of treachery; he resolved, therefore, to wait and observe, before making those attempts at reconciliation which became his character and his mission. Influenced by this determination, he spoke a few words to the aged chief on indifferent matters, and shortly afterwards retired to his own lodge.

During the preceding conversation Baptiste had been seated at a little distance, his whole attention apparently engaged in mending a rent in his mocassins, but scarcely a word had escaped his watchful ear, and while he heard with secret delight that there was every chance of a fight with the Sioux, towards whom he cherished, as we have before observed, an unextinguished hatred, he could not view, without much uneasiness, the dangerous position in which Reginald's party might be placed by a rupture between the Delawares and Osages, in a wild region where either party might soon obtain the ready aid of the Pawnees, or some other warlike and marauding tribe; he resolved, however, for the present to content himself with putting his young leader on his guard, reserving a fuller explanation until he should have been able to ascertain the intentions of his Delaware friends: in this last endeavour he did not anticipate much difficulty, for the experienced woodsman had proved his steadiness to them in many a fray, and his courage and skill were no less proverbial among them than was his mortal enmity to the Dahcotahs.

Nothing occurred during the ensuing night to disturb the quiet of the encampment, if that may be denominated quiet which was constantly interrupted by the chattering of wakeful squaws, the barking of dogs, the occasional chaunt of a warrior, and the distant howling of hungry wolves; our hero's dreams were, like his waking thoughts, full only of Prairie-bird; and when he rose at daybreak he expressed no wish to roam or hunt, but lingered within view of that small circular lodge, which contained the treasure that he valued most on earth. To the cautious warning of Baptiste he answered, smiling, "You confess yourself that you only suspect; you know our friends and their language, their wiles, and their stratagems. I trust the safety of my party to your sagacity; if your suspicions are turned to certainty, tell me, and I am ready to act."

As the young man left the lodge without even taking his cutlass or his rifle, Baptiste looking after him, shrugged his shoulders, adding in an under tone, just loud enough to be heard by Monsieur Perrot, who sat at his side,

"'Suspicion,' 'certainty,' 'sagacity'—why surely he is mad! he talks as if plots and plans were measured out by rule among the Red-skins, as they may be 'mong lords and princes in Europe! this comes of his towering, as they call it amongst the Dutch and other outlandish tribes Surely he's lived enough in the territory to know that with these Ingians, and special near a Sioux trail, the first suspicion a man is like to get is an arrow in his ribs or a tomahawk in his brain Capote-bleu, Maître Perrot, what do you think of your master, is he mad?"

"Very much mad," said the good-humoured valet, grinning, while he continued assiduously to pound some coffee-beans which he was preparing for breakfast; "very much mad, Monsieur Baptiste; he very mad to leave Paris to go to his fox-huntin' oncle in England; he more mad to leave dat for the back-woods by de Muskingum; but he dam mad to leave Mooshanne to come here where dere is nothing but naked savages and naked prairies."

"Ah! Maître Perrot," replied the guide, "my father was a Canada Frenchman, and although he was, mayhap, never further east than Montreal, he was as fond of talking of Paris as a bear is of climbing a bee-tree!"*

"He very right, Monsieur Ba'tiste; de world without Paris is no more dan a woman widout a tongue; but as you know our language, I will speak it to you, for pronouncing English is no better dan breaking stones wid your teeth!" And the merry valet forthwith inflicted upon his graver companion a Parisian tirade, that very soon went beyond the latter's stock of Canadian French.

The morning dawned with unusual splendour, the sun gradually rose over the wooded hills that bounded the eastern horizon, and the light breeze shook the dewdrops from the flowers, as Prairie-bird, fresh and lovely as the scene around her, tripped lightly over the grass to the sequestered spot which we have before mentioned as being her favourite resort; there, seated at the root of

* An allusion to the fondness of bears for honey occurs more than once in this tale, and will be met with in some shape or other in most works which treat of that animal's habits and propensities: that such is the case in Europe as well as in North America, may be gathered from the fact that in the Russian tongue, a Bear is called, "Med-vede," which word is thus formed: med, honey, vede, who knows "He who knows honey"

the aged tree where Reginald had first seen her, she opened the volume which was her constant companion, and poured forth the grateful feelings of her heart, in the words of the inspired Prophet-King; at her feet flowed the brawling stream which fed the valley below the encampment; the merry birds sang their matins among the leafy branches above her head, and around her sprang sweet-scented flowers and blossoms of a thousand varied hues. There are some spots, and some brief seasons on earth, so redolent of freshness, beauty, and repose, as almost to revive the Paradise lost by our first parents, but soon, too soon, the effects of primeval sin and its punishment are felt, and the atmosphere of heavenly peace is tainted by the miasma of human passion!

Prairie-bird had enjoyed for some time her study and her meditations undisturbed, when her attention was caught by the sound of approaching footsteps; the conscious blood rushed to her cheek as she expected to see the same visitor who had so suddenly presented himself on the preceding day, when to her surprise and annoyance, the gigantic figure of Mahéga stood before her on the opposite side of the streamlet by which she was seated; although simple, unsuspecting, and fearless by nature, there was something in the countenance and bearing of this formidable chief that had always inspired her with mingled dislike and awe; remembering on the present occasion the hint lately given to her by the Missionary, she returned the haughty greeting of the Indian by a gentle inclination of her head, and then summoned composure enough to continue her reading, as if desirous to avoid conversation; such, however, was not Mahéga's intention, who softening, as far as he was able, the rough tones of his voice, addressed to her, in the Delaware tongue, a string of the finest Indian compliments on her beauty and attractions. To these the maiden coldly replied, by telling him that she thanked him for his good words, but that as she was studying the commands of the Great Spirit, she wished not to be disturbed.

Mahéga, nothing checked by this reply, continued to ply her with protestations and promises, and concluded by telling her that she *must* be his wife; that he was a warrior, and would fill her wigwam with spoils and trophies. As he proceeded, his countenance became more excited, and the tones of his voice had already more of threat than of entreaty. Prairie-bird replied with forced calmness, that she knew he was a great warrior, but that she could not be his wife; their paths were different; his led to war, and spoils, and power in ruling his tribe; hers to tending the sick and fulfilling the commands of the Great Spirit given in the "Medicine Book." Irritated by the firm though gentle tone of her reply, the violent passion of the chief broke out in a torrent of harsh and menacing words; he called her a foundling and a slave; adding, that in spite of the Delaware squaws and their white allies, she should sleep in his lodge, although the honour was greater than she deserved.

Fired with indignation at this brutal menace, the spirited girl rose from her seat, and looking him full in the face, replied, "Prairie-bird is a foundling; if Mahéga knows his parents, he disgraces their name; she would rather be the *slave of Tamenund* than the wife of Mahéga."

A demoniac grin stole over the features of the savage, as he replied: "The words of Olitipa are bitter. Mahéga laughs at her anger; she is alone and unprotected; will she walk to his lodge, or must the warrior carry her?"

So saying, he advanced to the very edge of the narrow stream! The maiden, although alarmed, retained sufficient presence of mind to know that to save herself by flight was impossible, but the courage of insulted virtue supported her, and she answered him in a tone that breathed more of indignation than of fear.

"Olitipa is not alone—is not unprotected! The Great Spirit is her protector, before whom the stature of Mahéga is as a blade of grass, and his strength like that of an infant. See," she continued, drawing from her girdle a small sharp-pointed dagger, "Olitipa is not unprotected; if Mahéga moves a foot to cross that stream this knife shall reach her heart; and the great Mahéga will go to the hunting fields of the dead, a coward, and a woman-slayer."

As she spoke these words she held the dagger pointed to her bosom now heaving with high emotion; her form seemed to dilate, and her dark eye kindled with a prouder lustre. The glow on her cheek, and the lofty dignity of her attitude, only heightened her beauty in the eyes of the savage, and confirmed him in carrying out his fell purpose, to ensure the success of which he saw that stratagem, not force, must be employed; assuming, therefore, a sarcastic tone of voice, he replied,

"Olitipa trusts to the edge of her knife; Mahéga laughs at her." Then he continued in a louder key, as if addressing an Indian behind her, "Let Wânemi seize her arm and hold it."

As the surprised maiden turned her head in the direction where she expected to see the Indian to whom Mahéga was speaking, that crafty chief cleared the brook at a bound, and seizing her waist, while a smile of triumph lit up his features, said, "The pretty one is Mahéga's prisoner; there is no one here but himself; a cunning tale tickled the ears of Olitipa."

The hapless girl saw how she had been outwitted by the savage. She struggled in vain to free herself from his grasp, and a faint scream of despair broke from her lips.

The spring of a famished tiger on a heifer is not more fiercely impetuous than was the bound with which Reginald Brandon rushed from the adjacent thicket upon Mahéga,—reckless of his opponent's huge bulk and strength, forgetful that he was himself unarmed. The cry of Prairie-bird had strung with tenfold power every sinew in his athletic frame; seizing with both hands the throat of Mahéga, he grasped it with such deadly force that the Indian was compelled to release his hold of the maiden,—but he still retained her knife, and in the struggle plunged it into the arm and shoulder of Reginald, who relaxed not, however, his iron grasp, but still bore his opponent backward, until the foot of the latter tripped over a projecting root, and he fell with tremendous force upon his head, the blood gushing in torrents from his nose and mouth. Reginald, who had been dragged down in his fall, seized the dagger, and, as he raised it above his head, felt a light touch upon his arm, and turning round saw Prairie-bird kneeling at his side, her face pale as monumental marble, and the sacred volume still clasped in her hand.

"Kill him not, Reginald," she said, in a low, impressive voice; "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!"

breathless, and flushed with the late severe struggle, the young man replied, "I will spare the villain, dear Prairie-bird, at your bidding; he is stunned and senseless now, but he will soon recover, and his fury and thirst for revenge will know no bounds; he shall know, however, that I *have* spared him." So saying he cut off the dyed and ornamented scalp lock from the top of Mahéga's head, and laying it beside the prostrate chieftain, arose, and retired with Prairie-bird from the spot.

They walked together some distance in silence, for her heart was overcharged with contending emotions, and as they went she unconsciously clung to his arm for support; at length she stopped, and looking up in his face, her eyes glistening with tears, she said,

"How am I ever to thank you? my first debt of gratitude is due to Heaven; but you have been its brave, its blessed instrument of my deliverance from worse than death!" and a shudder passed over her frame as the rude grasp of Mahéga recurred to her remembrance.

"Dear Prairie-bird," he replied; "as a man I would have done as much for the poorest and most indifferent of your sex—how then am I repaid a thousand, thousand fold by having been allowed to serve a being so precious!" The deep mellow tone in which he spoke these words, and the look by which they were accompanied, brought the truant colour again to the cheek of his companion, and as she cast her full dark eyes downward, they rested on the arm that supported her, and she saw that his sleeve was stained and dropping with blood!

"Oh! you are wounded, badly hurt, I fear. Tell me, tell me, Reginald," she continued, with an intensity of anxiety that her expressive countenance betrayed, "are you badly hurt?"

"Indeed, dear Prairie-bird, I cannot tell you; I felt the Indian strike me twice with the dagger before he fell; I do not think the wounds are serious, for you see I can walk and assist your steps too."

While he thus spoke he was, however, growing faint from loss of blood, and the wound in his shoulder, having become cold and stiff, gave him exquisite pain. Prairie-bird was not deceived by the cheerfulness of his manner; she saw the paleness that was gradually stealing over his countenance, and with ready presence of mind, insisted on his sitting down on the trunk of a fallen tree beside their path. The suffering condition of Reginald redoubled instead of paralyzing her energies; she filled his cap with fresh water from the brook, urged him to taste a few drops, and sprinkled more over his face and temples; then ripping up the sleeve of his hunting shirt, she found the blood still welling from two severe wounds between the elbow and shoulder in the left arm; these she bathed and carefully closed, applying to them a healing salve which she drew from the small bag that she wore at her girdle, after which she bandaged the arm firmly with her kerchief, then, kneeling beside him, strove to read in his face the success of her simple surgery.

In the course of a few minutes the dizzy sensation of faintness, that had been produced by loss of blood, passed away, and the delighted Prairie-bird, seeing on his countenance the beaming smile of returning consciousness and strength, murmured to herself, "Oh! God, I thank thee!" then hiding her face in her hands, wept with mingled emotion and gratitude. Reginald heard the words, he marked the tears, and no longer able to suppress the feelings with which his heart overflowed, he drew her gently towards him with his yet unwounded arm, and whispered in her ear the outpourings of a first, fond, passionate love!

No reply came from her lips, her tears (tears of intense emotion) flowed yet faster; but a sensible pressure on the part of the little hand which he clasped within his own, gave him the blest assurance that his love was returned; and again and again did he repeat those sacred and impassioned vows by which the hopes, the fears, the fortunes, the affections, the very existence of two immortal beings, are inseparably blended together. Her unresisting hand remained clasped in his, and her head leaned upon his shoulder, that she might conceal the blushes that suffused her countenance; still he would not be satisfied without a verbal answer to his thrice urged prayer that he might call her his own; and when at length she raised her beaming eyes to his, and audibly whispered "For ever," he sealed upon those sweet lips the contract of unchanged affection.

Bright, transitory moments of bliss! lightning flashes that illumine the dark and stormy path of life, though momentary in your duration how mighty in your power, how lasting in your effects! Sometimes imparting a rapturous glow and kindling an unceasing heat that death itself cannot extinguish, and sometimes under a star of evil destiny searing and withering the heart rendered desolate by your scorching flame!

It is not necessary to inform the gentle reader how long the *tête-à-tête* on the fallen tree continued; suffice it to say that Prairie-bird forgot her fright, and Reginald his wounds; and when they returned to the village, each sought to enjoy in solitude those delicious reveries which deserve certainly the second place in love's catalogue of happiness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ethelston prepares to leave Mooshanne.—Mahéga appears as an Orator, in which Character he succeeds better than in that of a Lover.—A Storm succeeded by a Calm.

While the events described in the last chapters were in progress, the hours sped smoothly onward at Mooshanne. Lucy and Ethelston thought themselves justly entitled to a liberal compensation for the trials of their long separation, and as the spring advanced, morning and evening generally found them strolling together, in the enjoyment of its opening beauties. Sometimes Aunt Mary encountered them during the busy round of her visits to the poultry, the piggery, or to the cottage of some neighbour, whither sorrow or sickness called her. The mate frequently came over from Marietta to see his captain, and to inquire whether there was no early prospect of another voyage, for he already began to find that Time travelled slowly ashore; and although he consoled himself, now and then with a pipe and social glass in David Muir's back parlour, he longed to be afloat again, and told the worthy merchant, that he would rather have made the fresh-water trip in the canoe, than be laid up in dock, while he felt his old hull still stout and seaworthy. His son Henry continued to advance in the good graces of Jessie Muir, but unfortunately for the youth his father

had discovered his attachment, and lost no opportunity of bantering him in the presence of the young lady, accompanying his jokes with sundry grins, and severe pokes in the ribs, which caused sometimes a disagreeable alternation of vexation and confusion; nevertheless David Muir remained habitually blind to the state of his daughter's affections, and Dame Christie was a great deal too much occupied with the cares of domestic government (including the occasional lectures and reproofs administered to David), to admit of her troubling her head with, what she would have termed, their childish fancies.

Such was the general state of affairs on the banks of the Muskingum, when Colonel Brandon received letters from St. Louis, informing him that, since the departure of his son, various disputes had arisen between the agents of the different companies, and that unless a speedy and amicable arrangement could be effected, a heavy loss must necessarily fall upon the fur proprietors and others interested in the speculation. By the same post, a letter, bearing a foreign postmark, was placed in the hands of Ethelston, during the perusal of which, an expression of sadness spread itself over his countenance, and he fell abstractedly into a reverie, the subject of which was evidently of a painful nature. Such indications were not likely to escape the anxious and observant eye of love, and Lucy, laying her hand lightly on his arm, said, in a tone half joking, half serious, "Am I not entitled to know all your secrets now, Edward?"

"I think not," he replied in the same tone, "and I am rather disposed to refuse gratifying your curiosity, until you consent to acquiring such a title as shall be indisputable." Lucy coloured, but as she still held out her hand and threatened him with her displeasure if he continued disobedient, he gave her the letter, saying, "I suppose I must submit; the contents are sad, but there is no reason why I should withhold them from yourself, or from your father." With these words he left the room; after a short pause, Lucy, at the Colonel's request, read him the letter, which proved to be from young Lieutenant L'Estrange, and which, being translated, ran as follows:—

"My honoured friend,

"I need not tell you of the grief that I experienced on revisiting my changed and desolate home. My father has told me all that passed during your stay in the island. He looks upon those days not in anger, but in sorrow; he is sensible that for a time he did you injustice, and fears that, in the first bitterness of his grief, he may have omitted to make you full reparation. These feelings he entreats me to convey to you, and desires me to add, that, from the first day of your arrival to that of your final departure, your conduct was like yourself—noble, upright, and generous. The misfortune that we still bewail, we bow to, as being the infliction of a Providence whose ways are inscrutable. Accept the renewed assurance of the highest regard and esteem of your friend,

"Eugene L'Estrange."

As Lucy read this letter, her eyes filled with tears, though, perhaps, she could scarcely have explained whether she wept over the afflictions that had befallen the L'Estrange family, or the *generous testimony which it* bore to her lover's *conduct. The Colonel, too,* was much affected, and gladly acquiesced in his daughter's proposal, that they should, for the future, abstain from renewing a subject which must cause such painful recollections to Ethelston.

Ere many hours had elapsed, the latter was summoned to attend the Colonel, who informed him that the intelligence lately received from St. Louis was of a nature so important to his affairs, that it required immediate attention. "There is no one," he continued, "to whom I can well entrust this investigation except yourself, for none has deserved or received so much of my confidence." There was an unusual embarrassment and hesitation observable in Ethelston's countenance on hearing these words, which did not escape his guardian's quick eye, and the latter added, "I see, my dear fellow, that you are not disposed to leave Mooshanne again so soon; you are thinking about certain promises and a certain young lady—is it not so, Edward?"

"It is so, indeed, my best and kindest of friends," said Ethelston. "Can you think or wish that it should be otherwise?"

"Nay," said Colonel Brandon, smiling, "I will not deny that you are entitled to entertain such thoughts, but believe me, when I assure you seriously that this expedition is essential to your own interests and to mine. A great portion of the property left to you under my care by your father is invested in these fur companies; and ere you enter on the responsibilities of a married life, it is necessary that you put your affairs in such a posture, as to ensure some future provision for the lady of whom you are thinking. These arrangements will not detain you at St. Louis for more than six weeks or two months; by that time Reginald will have returned from his Indian excursion; you will come home together, and I will then listen patiently to whatever you may think fit to say regarding the young lady in question. Shall it be so, Edward?"

"How can I be grateful enough!" replied Ethelston, taking the Colonel's hand. "Give me only leave to explain to Lucy the cause and probable duration of my absence, then I am ready to receive your instructions and to set about it immediately."

We will not inquire too minutely how Lucy received this explanation from her lover's lip, nor what means he took to reconcile her to the proposed arrangement; it is sufficient to state, that she finally acquiesced with her habitual gentleness, and that, in a few days after the above conversation, Ethelston had completed his preparations for his journey to St. Louis.

We will again take leave of him and of Mooshanne for a season, and return to Mahéga, whom we left bleeding and senseless, at no great distance from the Osage and Delaware encampment. Indeed, we should, ere this, have accused ourselves of inhumanity towards that chief, for leaving him so long in such sorry plight, had he not merited severe punishment for his rough and brutal behaviour to "Prairie-bird."

When Mahéga recovered his senses, he was still so much confused from the stunning effects of the severe blow that he had received on the head, as well as from loss of blood, that he could not recall to mind the events immediately preceding his swoon; nor did they present themselves distinctly to his memory, until his eye rested upon his stained scalp lock, and beside it the knife that Reginald Brandon had driven firmly into the turf. Then he remembered

clearly enough the struggle, his fall, and the maiden's escape; and the rage engendered by this remembrance was rendered yet more violent, when he reflected on the insult that his scalp had sustained from an enemy who had scorned to take his life.

Fierce as were the passions that boiled within the breast of the Osage, his self-command was such that he was able to control all outward demonstration of them; and rising slowly, he first effaced in the stream all the sanguinary marks of the late contest, and then took his way towards the camp, revolving in his mind various projects for securing the two principal objects that he was determined to accomplish—the possession of Prairie-bird and the death of Reginald Blandon!

Although a wild, uninstructed savage, Mahéga was gifted with talents of no common order. Bold and inflexible in carrying out his purposes, he had cunning sufficient to make unimportant concessions to the opinions of other chiefs and braves in council. Unlike the great majority of his tribe and race, he was well aware of the power and strength resulting from union, and although all his ambition ultimately centred in himself, he had the art of persuading his countrymen that he sought only their interests and welfare; thus, while many hated and more feared Mahéga, he was the most influential chief in the tribe, on account of his daring courage, his success in war, and the reckless liberality with which he distributed among others his share of booty or of spoil. When the Delaware band had migrated to the banks of the Osage river, Mahéga's first impulse had been to attack and destroy them; but finding that the new comers were better supplied with arms and ammunition, the issue of a conflict seemed doubtful. Moreover, as they were visited by many traders, he calculated that, by keeping on friendly terms with them, he should acquire for his tribe and for himself many advantages greater than they had before enjoyed.

Acting upon these motives he had not only encouraged peace with the Delawares, but had effected through his own influence the league that had for some time united the two bands in one encampment; nor had he been mistaken in his expectations, for since their union with the band of Delawares, the Osages had been enabled to beat off the Pawnees and other roving tribes, from whose inroads upon their hunting ground they had before been exposed to frequent and severe disasters; the objects of which he had contemplated, had thus been for the most part accomplished. The tribe was plentifully supplied with arms and ammunition by the traders; his own influence among them was higher than ever; but he could not brook a rival to his fame as a warrior in War-Eagle, nor bear to be checked and thwarted in his ambitious schemes, by the mild authority of Tamenund.

The mind of Mahéga being thus prepared for seizing the earliest opportunity of coming to a rupture with the Delawares, it may well be imagined how his most violent and rancorous passions were excited by the scornful rejection of his suit on the part of Prairie-bird, and the disgrace he had incurred in his rencounter with her white protector. He resolved no longer to delay the meditated blow; he had already made a secret league with the warlike and powerful Dahcotahs; and the occasion seemed most favourable for wreaking his vengeance on the relatives of Prairie-bird, and the white men now resident in the Delaware camp.

Having once formed his determination, he set about carrying it into effect with the sagacity and profound dissimulation which had already obtained for him such an ascendancy in the Osage council. No sooner had he reached his lodge, than he dressed himself in his Medicine robe,* adorned his face with corresponding streaks of paint, and concealing the loss of his scalplock by a Spanish kerchief which he folded round his head, somewhat after the fashion of a turban, he sallied forth to visit the chiefs and braves, on whose co-operation he felt that success must mainly depend.

Some of these were already prepared to adopt his views, by their previous participation in the league with the Dahcotahs; others he bent and moulded to his purpose by arguments, and inducements suited to their character or circumstances; and ere he returned to his lodge, he felt confident that his proposed plans would be supported by the most influential warriors in the tribe, and that he should easily bear down the opposition of the more cautious and scrupulous, who might be disposed to keep faith with their Delaware allies.

In the meanwhile War-Eagle was not idle, he visited the principal braves and warriors of his tribe, and found them unanimous in their resolution to break off all communication with the Osages, as soon as the latter should commit any overt act that should justify them in dissolving the league into which they had entered. He also resolved to watch closely the movements of Mahéga, of whose malice and influence he was fully aware; with this view he selected an intelligent Delaware boy, who knew the Osage language, and desired him to hover about the tent of the chief, and to bring a report of all that he should see or hear.

Towards the close of day, Mahéga sent runners about his village, after the usual Indian fashion, to summon the warriors and braves, most of whom were already prepared for the harangue which he was about to address to them; as soon as a sufficient number were collected, the wily chief came forth from his lodge, in the dress before described, and began by thanking them for so readily obeying his call.

"Why did Mahéga call together the warriors?" he continued; "was it to tell them that a broad bison-trail is near the camp? The Medicine-men have not yet smoked the hunting pipe to the Wahcondah.—Was it to tell them of the scalps taken by their fathers? The young men have not been called to the war-dance, their ears have not heard the Drum.†—Was it to tickle their ears with words like dried grass? Mahéga's tongue is not spread with honey; he has called the Washashe to open their ears and eyes, to tell them that snakes have crept under their

* The Buffalo robes worn by the Osages, as well as by some other Missouri tribes, are variously ornamented and painted with devices. Some of these refer to war, some to marriage, some to medicine or mystery; these last are generally worn at councils, on which occasions a chief who has some important subject to propose, frequently adds to the paint on his face, some streaks corresponding to the devices on his Buffalo robe.

† In the performance of the war-dance among the Indians of the Missouri, the tread of the dancers is guided by a monotonous chaunt, sung by some of the Medicine-men, and accompanied by the beat of a small drum of the rudest construction, and most barren dismal tone. It is generally nothing more than a dried skin, stretched upon a wooden frame hollowed out with a knife by the squaws

lodges, that the dogs in the village have become wolves!"

As he paused, the auditors looked each at the other; those who were not yet instructed in the speaker's project being at a loss to catch the meaning of his words. Seeing that he had arrested their attention, he proceeded, "When Mahéga was young, when our fathers were warriors, who was so strong as the Washashe? Our hunters killed the deer and the bison from the Neska to the Topeo-kà.* The Konsas were our brothers, and we were afraid of none. But the Mahe-hunguh† came near, their tongues were smooth, their hands were full, and the Washashe listened to their talk;—is it not so?"

A deep murmur testified the attention of his auditors; but Mahéga knew that he was venturing on dangerous ground, and his present object was rather to incite them to vengeance against the band of Delawares and their guests, than against the white men in general. He resumed his harangue in a milder tone.

"The Long-knives smoked the pipe of peace with us, we gave them meat, and skins, and they gave us paint, and blankets, and fire-weapons with Medicine-powder and lead,—all that was well; but who came with the Long-knives,—the Lenapé!" He paused a moment, then looking fiercely round, he continued in a louder strain; "and who are these Lenapé? They were beggars when they came to us! Their skin is red, but their hearts are pale. Do we not know the tale of their fathers? Were they not slaves to the warriors of other nations?‡ Were they not women? Did they not leave the war-path to plant maize, and drink the fire-water of the Long-knives? They gave up their hunting ground; they left the bones of their fathers; they crossed the Ne-o-hunge,§ and asked for the friendship of the Washashe. We lighted the pipe for them; we received them like brothers, and opened to them our hunting ground; but their hearts are bad to us, Washashes, Mahéga tells you that the Lenapé are snakes!"

Another deep guttural sound, indicative of increased excitement, gratified the speaker's ear, and he continued in a strain yet bolder. "Is Mahéga not a chief? Has he not struck the bodies of his enemies? Are there no scalps on his war-shirt? He was good to these Lenapé, he treated their warriors like brothers, he offered to make Olitipa his wife, they gave him bitter words and threw dirt upon his lodge. Shall the Washashe chief be called a Dog?" he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "Shall he sit on the ground while a Lenapé spits in his face?"

A shout of anger and fury burst from the audience, as waving his hand impatiently for silence, he went on, "The Lenapé knew that their hearts were false, their arms weak, their tongues forked, and they have brought in a band of Long-knives to defend them and to drive the Washashe from their hunting grounds. Shall it be so? Shall we hold our backs to be scourged like children? Shall we whine like starved wolves? See how the pale faces can insult your chief." As he spoke Mahéga tore the turban with one hand from his head, and holding up his severed scalp lock with the other, while every muscle of his countenance worked with fury, "See what the hand of a white-face boy has done. Mahéga slept under a tree, and he whom they call Netis, the stranger who has eaten our meat and smoked with our chiefs, stole upon Mahéga, struck him on the head, and cut off his hair." As he uttered this audacious falsehood, which was, of course, believed by all who heard him, a terrific shout burst from the assembled Osages, and the wily chief, striking while the iron was hot, went on,

"It is enough—the Washashes are not women; they will dig up the hatchet, and throw it into the council-lodge of these white-faced and pale-hearted dogs. The great chief of the Dahcotahs has spoken to Mahéga; he seeks the friendship of the Washashes; the Dahcotahs are men; the bisons on their hunting grounds are like the leaves in the forest. They wish to call the Washashes brothers, they wait for Mahéga's words.—What shall he say?"

A tremendous shout was raised in reply, a shout that could be heard throughout the whole encampment. Mahéga saw that his triumph was complete, and folding his medicine robe over his shoulder, he once more waved his hand for silence, and dismissed the assembly, saying, "Before the sun sinks again the chiefs and braves will meet in council. The Washashes will hear their words and they will be ready." As he spoke he cast his dark eye expressively downwards to the tomahawk suspended at his belt, and slowly re-entered his lodge.

Meanwhile the youth who had been sent by War-Eagle to observe what was passing in the Osage encampment, executed his commission with fidelity and address. Although not sufficiently familiar with the language to catch all that fell from Mahéga, he yet learned enough to satisfy his young chief that a rupture was at hand. It only remained now to be proved whether it would take place as the result of an open council, or whether the Osages would withdraw secretly to their new Dahcotah allies.

On the morning succeeding the events above related, War-Eagle left the encampment before daybreak, partly to see whether he could discover any unusual stir among the Osages, and partly to revolve in his mind the course of conduct that he should suggest if called upon to give his opinion before the Lenapé council. Many various emotions were struggling in his bosom, and in this respect the descendants of Adam, whether their skins be white or red, so far resemble each other, that on such occasions they seek to avoid the turmoil of their fellowmen, and to be for a season alone amid the works of inanimate nature.

It was with impressions and feelings far different that Reginald and Prairie-bird found themselves soon after sunrise together, as if by tacit appointment, by the great tree, under which he had first seen her. In order to guard against the treachery of which he believed Mahéga capable, he had communicated to Baptiste the events of the preceding morning, and had desired him to watch the movements of the latter, especially

* The Indian names for the rivers now called "Konsas" and "Osage," both of which fall into the Missouri.

† *Anglicé*, Long-knives, or Americans.

‡ Mahéga here alludes to that unfortunate era, in the history of the Lenapé, so pathetically described by Heckewalder, when they permitted themselves to be persuaded by the whites to abandon all their warlike weapons and pursuits, and following those of agriculture, to leave the affairs of war entirely to the northern tribes, who guaranteed their safety. The consequence was such as might have been expected, they were treated with contumely and injustice; and being compelled, at length, to resume those arms to which they had been for some time unaccustomed, *they suffered repeated defeats* and disasters from the "six nations," and adjoining tribes.

§ *The Mississippi is so* called by the Osages.

guarding Prairie-bird against any renewal of his violence. The trusty forester, who had grown extremely taciturn since he had observed his young master's attachment, shrugged his shoulders, and briefly promised to obey his instructions. He was too shrewd to oppose a torrent such as that by which Reginald was carried away; and, although it must be confessed that he had many misgivings as to the reception that the tidings would meet with at the hands of Colonel Brandon, the beauty and gentleness of Prairie-bird had so far won upon his rough nature that he was well disposed to protect her from the machinations of the Osage. With these intentions he followed her when she left her lodge, and as soon as she entered the thicket before described, he ensconced himself in a shady corner whence he could observe the approach of any party from the encampment.

We will now follow the steps of War-Eagle, who, having satisfied himself by a careful observation of the out piquette that no immediate movement was on foot among the Osages, turned towards the undulating prairies to the westward of the village.

He was in an uneasy and excited mood, both from the treachery of the Osages towards his tribe, and various occurrences which had of late wounded his feelings in the quarter where they were most sensitive.

The victory over self, is the greatest that can be achieved by man, it assumes, however, a different complexion in those who are guided by the light of nature, and in those who have been taught by revelation. In the heathen it is confined to the actions and to the outward man, whereas in the Christian it extends to the motives and feelings of the heart. The former may spare an enemy, the latter must learn to forgive and love him. But in both cases the struggle is severe in proportion to the strength of the passion which is to be combated. In War-Eagle were combined many of the noblest features of the Indian character; but his passions had all the fierce intensity common to his race, and although the instructions of Paul Müller, falling like good seed on a wild but fertile soil, had humanized and improved him; his views of Christianity were incipient and indistinct, while the courage, pride, and feelings of his race were in the full zenith of their power. He had long known that Prairie-bird was not his sister in blood, she had grown up from childhood under his eye, and unconsciously perhaps at first, he had loved her, and still loved her with all the impassioned fervour of his nature. It may be remembered in the earlier portion of this tale, when he first became acquainted with Reginald, that he had abstained from all mention of her name, and had avoided the subject whenever young Wingenund brought it forward. He had never yet asked Olitipa to become his wife, but the sweet gentleness of her manner, and her open contempt for the addresses of the handsome and distinguished Osage, had led him to form expectations favourable to his own suit. At the same time there was something in the maiden's behaviour that had frequently caused him to doubt whether she loved him, and sharing in the awe with which she inspired all the Indians around her, he had hitherto hesitated and feared to make a distinct avowal. Of late he had been so much occupied in observing the suspicious movements of the Osages that his attention had been somewhat withdrawn from Olitipa: he was aware of her having become acquainted with Reginald, and the adventure of the preceding day, which had been communicated to him, filled him with an uneasiness that he could not conceal from himself, although he had succeeded in concealing it from others.

In this frame of mind, he was returning to the camp, along the course of the streamlet passing through the grove where the rencounter of the preceding day had occurred. When he reached the opening before described, his eyes rested on a sight that transfixed him to the spot. Seated on one of the projecting roots of the ancient tree was Prairie-bird, her eye and cheek glowing with happiness, and her ear drinking in the whispered vows of her newly betrothed lover; her hand was clasped in his, and more than once he pressed it tenderly to his lips. For several minutes, the Indian stood silent and motionless as a statue; despair seemed to have checked the current of his blood, but by slow degrees consciousness returned; he saw her, the maiden whom he had served and loved for weary months and years, now interchanging with another tokens of affection not to be mistaken, and that other a stranger whom he had himself lately brought by his own invitation from a distant region.

The demon of jealousy took instant possession of his soul; every other thought, feeling, and passion, was for the time annihilated, the nobler impulses of his nature were forgotten, and he was, in a moment, transformed to a merciless savage, bent on swift and deadly vengeance. He only paused as in doubt, *how* he should kill his rival; perhaps, whether he should kill them both; his eye dwelt upon them with a stern ferocity, as he loosened the unerring tomahawk from his belt; another moment he paused, for his hand trembled convulsively, and a cold sweat stood like dew upon his brow. At this terrible crisis of his passion, a low voice whispered in his ear, in the Delaware tongue,

"Would the Lenapé chief stain his Medicine with a brother's blood?" War-Eagle, turning round, encountered the steady eye of Baptiste; he gave no answer, but directed his fiery glance towards the spot where the unconscious lovers were seated, and the half raised weapon still vibrated under the impulse of the internal struggle that shook every muscle of the Indian's frame. Profiting by the momentary pause, Baptiste continued, in the same tone, "Shall the tomahawk of the War-Eagle strike an adopted son of the Unami?* The Bad Spirit has entered my brother's heart; let him hold a talk with himself, and remember that he is the son of Tamenund."

By an effort of self-control, such as none but an Indian can exercise, War-Eagle subdued, instantaneously, all outward indication of the tempest that had been aroused in his breast. Replacing the tomahawk in his belt, he drew himself proudly to his full height, and, fixing on the woodsman an eye calm and steady as his own, he replied,

"Grande-Hâche speaks truth; War-Eagle is a chief; the angry Spirit is strong; but he tramples it under his feet." He then added, in a

* After their first meeting, in which Reginald had saved the life of War-Eagle, the latter had adopted his new friend, not only as a brother, but as a member of that portion of his tribe who were called Unami, and of which the turtle was the Medicine, or sacred symbol; after the ratification of such a covenant of brotherhood, each party is, according to Indian custom, solemnly bound to defend the other, on all occasions, at the risk of his own life.

lower one, "War-Eagle will speak to Netis; not now; if his white brother's tongue has been forked, the Medicine of the Unami shall not protect him. The sky is very black, and War-Eagle has no friend left." So saying, the Indian threw his light blanket over his shoulder and stalked gloomily from the spot.

Baptiste followed with his eye the retreating figure of the Delaware, until it was lost in the dense foliage of the wood.

"He *is* a noble fellow," said the rough hunter, half aloud, leaning on his long rifle, and pursuing the thread of his own reflections. "He is one of the old sort of Ingians, and there's but few of 'em left. I've been with him in several skrimmages, and I've seen him strike and scalp more than one Dahcotah; but I never saw the glare of his eye so wild and blood-thirsty before; if he had kept his purpose, my old sinews would have had some trouble to save Master Reginald from that tomahawk. It's well for him that I've lived long enough among the Delawares to know the ins and outs of their natur', as well as John Skellup at the ferry knows the sand-bars and channels in Bearcreek Shallows. I thought the Unami Medicine whispered in his ear might do something; but I scarcely hoped it could smother such a fire in a minute. I remember, when I was young, I was in a hot passion, now and then, myself. *Capote!* I'm sometimes in a passion still, when I think of those cut-throat Sioux, and if my bristles are up, it takes some time to smooth 'em down." Here the woodsman's hand unconsciously rested for a moment on the huge axe suspended at his belt; but his musings took another course, as he continued his muttered soliloquy.

"Well, I sometimes think the bears and the deer have more reason than human critturs, ay, and I believe that shot isn't overwide o' the mark. Look at them two youngsters, Master Reginald and War-Eagle, two brave, honest hearts as ever lived; one saves the other's life; they become brothers and swear friendship; of a sudden, I am obliged to step in between 'em, to prevent one from braining the other with a tomahawk. And what's the cause of all this hate and fury? Why, love—a pair of black eyes and red lips; a strange kind of love, indeed, that makes a man hate and kill his best friend; thank Heaven, I have nothing to do with such love; and I say, as I said before, that the dumb animals have more reason than human critturs. Well, I must do all I can to make 'em friends again, for a blind man might see they'll need each other's help, ere many days are past!"

So saying, the woodsman threw his rifle into the hollow of his arm, and moved towards Reginald Brandon, who, unconscious of the danger that he had so narrowly escaped, was still engaged with Prairie-bird in that loving dialogue which finds no satiety in endless reiteration.

Baptiste drew near, and, after the usual greetings, took an opportunity, as he thought unobserved by Prairie-bird, of making a sign to Reginald that he wished to speak with him in private; but the maiden, watchful of every movement directly or indirectly affecting her lover, and already aware of the intrigues and treachery of the Osages, said to him with her usual simplicity of manner, "Baptiste, if you have aught to say requiring my absence, I will go; but as there are dangers approaching that threaten us *all alike, do not fear to speak* before me. I know *something of these people*, and though only an unskilled maiden, my thoughts might be of some avail."

The sturdy hunter, although possessed of a shrewd judgment, was somewhat confused by this direct appeal; but after smoothing down the hair of his fur cap for a few moments, as was his custom when engaged in reflection, he resolved to speak before her without concealment; and he proceeded accordingly, with the blunt honesty of his nature, to narrate to them all the particulars of his late interview with War-Eagle. During his recital, both the auditors changed colour more than once, with different yet sympathetic emotions; and when he concluded, Reginald suddenly arose, and, fixing his eye upon the maiden's countenance, as if he would read her soul, he said,

"Prairie-bird, I conjure you by all you love on earth, and by all your hopes of Heaven! tell me truly, if you have known and encouraged these feelings in War-Eagle?"

The dark eyes that had been cast to the ground with various painful emotions, were raised at this appeal, and met her lover's searching look with the modest courage of conscious truth as she replied,

"Reginald, is it possible that you can ask me such a question? Olitipa, the foundling of the Delawares, loved War-Eagle as she loved Wingenund; she was brought up in the same lodge with both; she called both, brother; she thought of them only as such! Had War-Eagle ever asked for other love, she would have told him she had none other to give! She knew of none other, until—until—" The presence of a third person checked the words that struggled for utterance; her deep eyes filled with tears, and she hid them on Reginald's bosom.

"I were worse than an infidel, could I doubt thy purity and truth," he exclaimed with fervour; "Baptiste, I will speak with my Indian brother.—I pity him from my heart—I will strive all in my power to soothe his sorrow; for I, and I alone can know what *he* must suffer, who has, in secret and in vain, loved such a being as this! Let us return."

Slowly and sadly they wended their way to the encampment, the guide bringing up the rear. He was thoroughly convinced that Prairie-bird had spoken the truth: every look, every accent carried conviction with it; but he feared for the meeting between the young men, being fully aware of the impetuosity of Reginald's character, and of the intense excitement that now affected the Indian's mind. He determined, however, to leave them to themselves, for he had lived enough among men of stormy and ungoverned passions to know, that in a *tête-à-tête* between two high and generous spirits a concession will often be made, to which pride might, in the presence of others, never have submitted.

On reaching their quarters in the encampment, they found Paul Müller standing thoughtfully before Prairie-bird's tent, into which, after exchanging a brief but cordial greeting, he and the maiden withdrew, leaving Reginald and the guide to retire into the adjoining lodge of Tamenund.

War-Eagle, who had posted himself in a spot whence, without being seen himself, he could observe their movements, now walked slowly forward to the entrance of the tent, into which he was immediately invited by the Missionary; his manner was grave and composed, nor could the most observant eye have traced, in the line

of his countenance, the slightest shade of excitement or agitation.

After the usual salutation, he said, "War-Eagle will speak to the Black-Father presently; he has now low words for the ear of Olitipa."

Paul Müller, looking on him with a smile, benevolent though somewhat melancholy, said, "I shut my ears, my son, and go, for I know that War-Eagle will speak nothing that his sister should not hear;" and so saying, he retired into his adjacent compartment of the tent. Prairie-bird, conscious of the painful scene that awaited her, sat in embarrassed silence, and for upwards of a minute War-Eagle contemplated without speaking the sad but lovely expression of the maiden's countenance; that long and piercing look told him all that he dreaded to know; he saw that Baptiste had spoken to her; he saw that his hopes were blasted; and still his riveted gaze was fixed upon her, as the eyes of one banished for life dwell upon the last receding tints of the home that he is leaving for ever. Collecting, at length, all the stoic firmness of his nature, he spoke to her in the Delaware tongue; the words that he used were few and simple, but in them, and in the tone of his voice, there was so much delicacy mingled with such depth of feeling, that Prairie-bird could not refrain from tears.

Answering him in the same language, she blended her accustomed sincerity of expression with gentle words of soothing kindness; and, in concluding her reply, she took his hand in hers, saying, "Olitipa has long loved her brothers, War-Eagle and Wingenund, let not a cloud come between them now; her heart is not changed to the great warrior of Lenapé; his sister trusts to his protection; she is proud of his fame; she has no other love to give him; her race, her religion, her heart forbid it! but he is her dear brother; he will not be angry, nor leave her.

"Mahéga and the Osages are become enemies; the Dahcotah trail is near; Tamenund is old and weak; where shall Olitipa find a brother's love, and a brother's aid, if War-Eagle turns away his face from her now?"

The noble heart to which she appealed had gone through its fiery ordeal of torture, and triumphed over it. After the manner of his tribe, the Delaware, before relinquishing her hand, pressed it for a moment to his chest, in token of affection, and said, "It is enough, my sister's words are good, they are not spilt upon the ground; let Mahéga or the Dahcotahs come near the lodge of Olitipa, and they shall learn that War-Eagle is her brother!" The chief-tain's hand rested lightly on his tomahawk, and his countenance, as he withdrew from the tent, wore an expression of high and stern resolve.

How often in life is the observation forced upon us, that artlessness is the highest perfection of art! It is an axiom, the truth of which remains unchanged under whatever aspect we view it, and is indisputable even in its converse; thus, as in writing, the apparent ease and simplicity of style is the result of frequent correction and laborious study; so in corporeal exercises, the most assiduous practice must be combined with the highest physical qualifications, ere the dancer or the posture-master can emulate the unconscious grace displayed in the movements of a sportive kitten, or a playful child.

Had Prairie-bird been familiar with all the learned treatises on rhetoric that have appeared from the time of Aristotle to the present day, she could not have selected topics better calculated to move and soften the heart of her Indian brother. And yet she had no other instructor in the art than the natural delicacy of her sex and character. While the tribute to his warlike fame gratified his pride, the unstudied sisterly affection of her tone and manner soothed his wounded feelings; and while her brief picture of her unprotected state aroused all his nobler and more generous sentiments, no breath of allusion to his successful rival's name kindled the embers of jealousy that slumbered beneath them.

As he walked from her tent, the young Indian's heart dilated within him; he trod the earth with a proud and lordly step; he had grappled with his passion; and though it had been riveted "to his soul with hooks of steel," he had plucked it forth with an unflinching hand, and he now met his deep-rooted grief with the same lofty brow and unconquerable will with which he would have braved the tortures of the Dahcotah stake.

CHAPTER XXV.

In which the Reader will find a moral Disquisition somewhat tedious, a true Story somewhat incredible, a Conference that ends in Peace, and a Council that betokens War.

It is not a feature in the character of Indians to do anything by halves; their love and their hate, their patience and impatience, their abstinence and self-indulgence, all are apt to run into extremes. Moderation is essentially a virtue of civilization; it is the result of forethought, reasoning, and a careful calculation of consequences, whereas the qualities of the Indian are rather the children of impulse, and are less modified by conflicting motives; hence, the lights and shades of character are broader and more distinct; and though it may be perhaps impossible that Indian villany should assume a deeper dye than that which may unfortunately be met with among civilized nations, it is not asserting too much to say, that there are to be found among these savages instances of disinterested, self-devoted heroism, such as are rarely heard of beyond the world of chivaly and romance.

This assertion will be received by many readers with an incredulous smile, and still more will be disposed to believe that it can be true only in reference to such virtues or actions as are the immediate result of a generous impulse; but examples are not wanting to prove the argument to be defensible upon higher grounds. It will readily be admitted, that retributive justice, although consonant to the first principles of reason and natural law, cannot, when deliberately enforced, be considered in the light of a sudden impulse, much less can it be so considered when the party enforcing it is to be himself the sufferer by it; and those who are conversant with the history of the Indian nations can testify that parallel instances to that which follows have frequently occurred among them.

Some years ago, a young married Indian, residing on the western bank of the Mississippi, quarrelled with another of his tribe, and in the heat of passion killed him with a blow of his tomahawk. After a few moments' reflection he walked direct to the village, and presenting himself before the wigwam of the murdered man, called together his relations, and addressed them as follows:

"Your relative was my friend; we were together,—some angry words arose between us,—I killed him on the spot. My life is in your hands, and I have come to offer it to you; but the summer hunting season has now begun. I have a wife and some young children, they have done you no wrong; I wish to go out into the woods to kill a plentiful supply of meat, such as may feed them during the winter; when I have done that, I will return and give myself to you."

The stern assembly of mourners gave their assent, and the young man retired: for many weeks he toiled indefatigably in the chase, his wife jerked and dried the meat as he daily brought it in, until he saw that the supply was ample for the ensuing winter; he then bid farewell to her and to his little ones, and once more presenting himself before the wigwam of his late friend, he said, "I am come: my squaw has meat for the winter, my life is now yours!" To these words the eldest male relative of the deceased replied, "It is well:" and rising from the ground, executed on, the unresisting offender the summary justice of Indian retribution, by cleaving his skull with a tomahawk. Neither the self-devotion of the one, nor the unrelenting severity of the other, excited any peculiar sensation, each having acted according to the strict, though barbarous usage of the tribe.

Among a people accustomed to look with stoic composure on scenes such as that just described, War-Eagle had already won a distinguished name, and he supported it on this trying occasion by resigning what was dearer to him than life, and crushing, as under a weight of iron, that passion which had been for years the hope and nourishment of his heart; whether, albeit crushed and smothered, it still lingered there, is a secret which it is neither our wish nor our province to betray, but regarding which the reader may form his own opinion from the subsequent conduct of the chief.

His first step was to seek Reginald Brandon, whom he desired, by a silent signal, to leave the lodge and follow him. Our hero mechanically obeyed, in a painful state of excitement and agitation, feeling that he had been the unconscious means of blasting all the dearest hopes of his Indian friend; and although he had intended no injury, he was sensible that he had done one, such as man can rarely forgive, and can never repair; for even had the romantic generosity of friendship prompted him to resign all pretensions to Prairie-bird, he felt that such a resignation, while he was secure of her affections, would be mere mockery and insult. He knew also how prominent a feature is revenge in the Indian character, and thought it not improbable that he might be now following his conductor to some secluded spot, where their rivalry should be decided by mortal strife, and the survivor return to claim the lovely prize. This last thought, which would, under any other circumstances, have nerved his arm and made his heart exult within him, now overwhelmed him with sadness, for he loved both Wingenund and War-Eagle, they were endeared to him by reciprocal benefits, and he shrunk from a quarrel with the latter as from a fratricide.

Meanwhile the Indian strode rapidly forward; neither could Reginald detect the feelings that lurked beneath the dignified and unmoved composure of his countenance.

After walking in silence for some minutes, *they reached a small hollow*, where a few scattered alder-bushes screened them from the observation of the stragglers round the skirts of the Delaware camp: here the chief suddenly halted, and turning towards Reginald, bent on him the full gaze of his dark and lustrous eyes; the latter observed with surprise that their expression, as well as that of his usually haughty features, was a deep composed melancholy.

At length the Delaware broke the long and painful silence, addressing his companion, after his imperfect notion of English, in the following words:

"The Great Spirit sent a cloud between Netis and War-Eagle—a very black cloud; the lightning came from it and blinded the eyes of the Lenapé chief, so that he looked on his brother and thought he saw an enemy. The Bad Spirit whispered in his ear that the tongue of Netis was forked; that the heart of Olitipa was false; that she had listened to a mocking-bird, and had mingled for War-Eagle a cup of poison."

The Delaware paused for a moment; his eye retained its steady but sad expression, his lips were firmly compressed, and not a muscle betrayed the intensity of his feeling; but Reginald appreciated rightly the self-control that had conquered, in so severe a struggle, and grasping his friend's hand he said,

"Noble and generous son of the Lenapé, the Bad Spirit has no power over a heart like yours! Are we not brothers? Have not the waters of the Muskingum, and the treacherous knife of the Huron, tied our hearts together, so that no fear, no suspicion, no falsehood, can come between them? Netis believed that War-Eagle loved Olitipa only as a sister, or he would rather have given his scalp to Mahéga than have spoken soft words in the maiden's ear!"

"My brother's words are true," replied the Delaware, in the low and musical tone for which his voice was remarkable; "War-Eagle knows it; he has dreamed, and is now awake: Olitipa is his sister—the Great Spirit decrees that no child of an Indian warrior shall call her mother. It is enough." The countenance of the Delaware assumed a sterner expression as he continued:

"My brother must be ready; let his rifle be loaded and his eye open, for Tamenund has seen the snow of many winters; the Black Father is good and true, but his hand knows not the tomahawk: the Osage panther will crouch near the tent of Olitipa, and the feet of the Cut-throats* will not be far; before the sun goes down War-Eagle will see his brother again."

Thus saying, and waiting no reply, he returned with hearty strides towards the village. Reginald gazed long and earnestly after the retreating figure of the Indian, forgetting awhile, in admiration of his heroic self-control, the dangers that beset his beloved and his party.

"Could I," he asked himself, "could I, under the same circumstances, with all the light, and aid, and high motives of Christianity, have shown the forbearance, generosity, and self-command displayed by this noble heathen? Could I have seen all my long-cherished hopes, my warm and passionate love, blasted in a moment, and have so soon, so frankly, and so fully exculpated and forgiven the man to whom I owed my misery? I hope I might have done so, still I am afraid to ask my heart the question!"

Reginald's cheek glowed under the influence

* The Sioux, or Dahcotahs, are so designated by the Missouri tribes.

of this self-scrutiny, and he gladly availed himself of the approach of Paul Müller, to whom he related what had passed, and expressed in the warmest terms his admiration of his Indian brother's conduct. The good Missionary felt inexpressibly relieved at hearing the amicable issue now announced to him, for although he had never been made a confidant of War-Eagle's feelings towards Olitipa, his own observation had shown him of late that they were not exactly fraternal, and he had viewed with dread a rivalry between the two high-spirited young men, at a crisis when the aid of both might be so necessary to protect his fair pupil from the perils by which she was surrounded.

Meanwhile the machinations of Mahéga, which had been conducted with his accustomed secrecy and cunning, were almost ripe for execution; several runners had interchanged communication between him and the Dahcotah chief, the latter of whom was delighted at the prospect thus unexpectedly offered, of taking vengeance on his ancient and hated Lenapé foes. A secret council of the Osages had been held, at which a treaty with the Sioux and a rupture with the Delawares were discussed, and almost unanimously carried, Mahéga appearing rather to have coincided in the general determination than to have caused it by his influence and intrigues. The result of this council was, that the Osage village immediately struck their lodges, the horses were driven in, skins, poultry, provisions, and all their utensils were packed upon them, and in a few hours the whole body moved in a northeasterly direction towards the upper fork of the river Konzas.

While they were departing, the Delaware council was summoned by a crier; Reginald and Baptiste were also invited to attend, the former in compliment to his station in the tribe as adopted brother of War-Eagle, the latter being recognised as a warrior of tried courage and experience. The chiefs and braves having seated themselves in a semicircle, the centre of which was occupied by Tamenund, the great medicine pipe was first passed round in silence and with the accustomed solemnities, after which Tamenund arose, and in a voice feeble from age, but distinctly audible, proceeded to explain to the assembly the affairs respecting which they had met to consult. While he was speaking, one of the Indians appointed to guard the entrance of the council-lodge came in, and announced a messenger from the Osage encampment. Tamenund paused, and desired the messenger to be introduced.

All eyes were bent sternly on the envoy, who advanced with a haughty and dignified step into the centre of the lodge, where he stood still, and resting on a long lance which he held in his right hand, awaited, according to Indian custom, a signal from the council-chief to deliver his errand. His dress, and the paint by which his body was adorned, had evidently been prepared with every attention to the niceties of Indian diplomacy, some portions of it being significant of peace or alliance, and others of hostile preparation: his right side was painted red, with streaks of black; on his left arm he wore a round shield of buffalo-hide, a quiver of arrows hung at his back, a tomahawk and knife were in his girdle, and in his left hand he carried a large string of wampum,* adorned with sundry ribbons and thongs of parti-coloured deerskin.

The Delawares recognised in the messenger a young kinsman of Mahéga, one who had already distinguished himself by several feats of daring gallantry, and had been lately enrolled among the braves of his nation. He had hitherto been upon the most friendly terms with the Lenapé, was familiar with their language, and had volunteered on more than one occasion to follow War-Eagle on the war-path; but the lines of paint and his accoutrements were now, as has before been observed, so carefully selected, that their practised eyes were unable to decide whether peace or war was the object of his mission; neither was any inference to be drawn from his countenance or bearing, for, after the first cold saluation on entering, he leaned on his lance in an attitude of haughty indifference. Under these circumstances he was not invited to sit, neither was the pipe handed to him, but Tamenund briefly addressed him as follows:

"The messenger of the Osage may speak. The ears of the Lenapé are open."

"Flying-arrow," replied the young man, in a modest and quiet tone, "knows that many winters have passed over the head of the Lenape chief; he is sorry to speak hard words to Tamenund."

"Let the young warrior speak freely; Tamenund knows that he is the mouth of the Osage council," was the grave reply.

"The Washashee say that the Lenapé have walked in a crooked path. The council have assembled, and the words delivered to Flying-arrow are these. The Washashee allowed the Lenapé to kill meat on their hunting-ground, they smoked the pipe together, and gave each other the wampum-belt of peace; but the Lenapé hearts are white, though their skin is red; their tongues are smooth with telling many lies: they have brought the pale-faces here to aid them in driving the Washashee from the hunting-fields of their fathers! Is it not true?" continued the fearless envoy, in a louder strain. "They have done all they can to throw dirt upon the lodges of those whom they call brothers. When Mahéga offered to take the daughter of Tamenund as his wife, what was said to him? Does not the pale face who crept upon him and defiled his medicine, still sit and smoke at the Lenapé fire? Mahéga says, let Tamenund give him Olitipa for a wife, and the pale-face, called Netis, as a prisoner, and let him send back the other white men to the Great river; then Mahéga will believe that the hearts of the Lenapé are true to the friendship pledged on this belt."

Thus saying, he shook the wampum before the assembled Delawares with an air of proud defiance. A brief pause followed this daring speech; the heart of War-Eagle boiled within him, but a scornful smile sat upon his haughty countenance, as he waited composedly for the reply of his father, who seemed engaged in deep and serious meditation.

Reginald had, of course, been unable to follow the envoy's discourse, but his quick ear had detected his own name; and a fierce look, which accompanied its pronunciation, told him that he was personally interested in the object of the Osage's message. Having gathered from Baptiste, in a whisper, the nature of Mahéga's charge and demand, a flush of indignation coloured his brow, but the examples of self-com-

* Wampum, a *corruption of the word* "wampampeu," small shells strung together, and used by the Indians for barter among themselves; a belt of wampum is the symbol of peace, as the hatchet, or tomahawk, is that of war.

mand that he had so lately seen, and that he still witnessed in the iron features by which he was surrounded, taught him to place a like restraint upon his own feelings, and to await the reply of the aged chief.

The latter, fixing his eye sternly upon the envoy, thus addressed him: "Mahéga has filled the young brave's mouth with lies. The hearts of the Lenapé are true as the guiding-star.* They are faithful to their friends, they fear no enemies. Tamenund will not give Olitipa to Mahéga, nor his adopted son to be the Washashee's prisoner. Tamenund is old, but he is not blind; Mahéga wishes to become a friend of the Dahcotahs. It is well; he will find among them hearts as bad, and tongues as forked as his own! I have spoken."

A deep murmur of approbation followed the aged chief's brief but energetic harangue, and as soon as it was concluded, the fearless messenger drew a sharp knife from his girdle, and severing the wampum-belt, he cast the two halves on the ground, saying, "It is well. Thus is the league between the Washashee and the Lenapé divided!"

Baptiste, to whom Reginald had again addressed a few words in a whisper, now rose, and having requested permission of Tamenund, said to the Osage messenger: "Netis desires you to tell Mahéga that he is a liar—brave enough to frighten women, but nothing more. If he is a warrior, let him come to-morrow at sunrise to the open prairie, north of the camp; the friends of both shall stand back three arrowflights apart; Netis will meet him with a rifle and a hunting-knife; Olitipa will not be there to save his life again!"

Another murmur of approbation went round the assembly, many of whom had already heard of the rough treatment that the gigantic Osage had received at Reginald's hands, but hearing it now confirmed by the lips of a tried warrior, like Grande-Hâche, they looked with increased respect and esteem on the adopted brother of War-Eagle.

"Flying-arrow will tell Mahéga," was the brief reply; and the messenger, glancing his eye haughtily around the circle, left the lodge and returned to the encampment of his tribe. After his departure the council continued their deliberations for some time, and had not yet concluded them, when a distant and repeated shouting attracted their attention, and a Delaware youth, of about fifteen years of age, rushed into the lodge, breathless, and bleeding from a wound inflicted by an arrow, which had pierced his shoulder. A few hurried sentences explained to the chiefs the news of which he was the bearer. It appeared that he had been tending, in a bottom not far distant, a herd of horses, chiefly belonging to Tamenund, War-Eagle, and the party of white men, when a band of mounted Sioux came sweeping down the valley at full speed; two or three young Delawares, who formed the out-picquet on that side, had been taken completely by surprise, and paid with their lives the penalty of their carelessness.

The wounded youth who brought the intelligence had only escaped by his extreme swiftness of foot, and by the unwillingness of the enemy to approach too near the camp. Thus had the Dahcotahs succeeded in carrying off, by a bold stroke, upwards of one hundred of the best *horses from* the Delaware village; and Reginald soon learned, to his inexpressible annoyance and regret, that Nekimi was among the number of the captives. A hurried consultation followed in which War-Eagle, throwing off the modes reserve that he had practised during the council, assumed his place as leader of the Lenapé braves, of whom he selected forty of the most active and daring, to accompany him on the difficult and dangerous expedition that was to be instantly undertaken for the recovery of the stolen horses.

Reginald and Baptiste eagerly volunteered, and were instantly accepted by War-Eagle; but it was not without some persuasion on the part of the Guide, that the chief allowed Monsieur Perrot to be of the party; that faithful valet insisted, however, so obstinately upon his right to attend his master, that, on Baptiste enjoining that he should implicitly obey orders, he was permitted to form one of the selected band.

In less than half an hour, from the receipt of the above disastrous intelligence, the party left the camp well armed and equipped, each man carrying three pounds of dried buffalo meat; and Baptiste secured twice that quantity to his sturdy person, thinking it probable that Reginald's endurance of hunger might not prove proportionate to his active qualities. The latter had, indeed, forgotten the meat altogether, for he passed the last few minutes of his stay within the camp, in bidding farewell to "Prairie-bird," and in assuring her that he would not be long absent, but trusted soon to return with his favourite Nekimi. At his departure, Reginald left the strictest orders with Bearskin (who remained in charge of his party) to keep a faithful watch over the safety of Prairie-bird, and to follow the injunctions that he might receive from Tamenund and Paul Müller.

The small band who, at the instigation of Mahéga, had stolen the Delaware horses, were chosen warriors, well-mounted, thoroughly trained to the predatory warfare in which they were now engaged, and ready, either to defend their prize against an equal force, or to baffle the pursuit of a superior one. As War-Eagle had lost many of his best horses, he resolved to follow the enemy's trail on foot, but he desired two or three of his most active and enterprising followers, whose horses had not been stolen, to hover on the rear of the retreating party, to watch their movements, and bring back any intelligence that might aid him in the pursuit.

The select band of Delawares moved swiftly forward under the guidance of their young leader; close upon his steps followed Reginald, burning with impatience to recover his favourite steed; next to him came Baptiste, then Perrot, and the remainder of the Lenapé warriors.

The prairie-grass, trodden down by the hoofs of the galloping and affrighted steeds driven from their pasture, afforded a trail that could be traced without difficulty, and the trampled banks of several slow and lazy streams, which they passed in their course, marked the headlong course taken by their fugitive steeds and their fierce drivers.

We will leave the pursuers for a time, and follow the movements of Mahéga, who was now acting in concert with the Sioux, and who contrived by his superior address to direct their plans, as completely as if he had been himself the chief of their tribe. Having accompanied the Osage village, fourteen or fifteen miles on their route to the northward, he ordered a halt

The North star is often alluded to by the Indian tribes under this and other similar denominations.

by the side of a stream, in a valley adjacent to the encampment of their new allies, the two bands forming a body so superior in number to the Delawares, that they had no cause to fear an attack, especially as they learned from their scouts that War-Eagle and his followers had gone in an opposite direction in pursuit of the horse-stealing party.

The evening was dark, and favoured the execution of a plot which Mahéga had formed, and in furtherance of which all his preceding measures had been taken. As soon as the sun had set, he selected one hundred of the bravest and most experienced warriors in his tribe, whom he armed only with bow and arrows, knife, and tomahawk; strictly forbidding the use of any firearms; for he well knew that the latter were far from being effective weapons in the hands of his followers, especially in such an expedition as that in which he was engaged. Swiftly and silently they moved under their leader's guidance, who, directing his course towards the southeast, brought them, after a few hours' march, to the line of wood skirting the great Prairie. Aware that the warriors remaining in the Delaware encampment would be prepared against any surprise from the quarter in which the Sioux were posted, his present object was to make his attack from the opposite side, in order to effect which, undiscovered, the greatest skill and rapidity were necessary.

It was on occasions such as these that the qualities of the Osage chief were most conspicuously exhibited; with light and noiseless step, he led his party through the depths of the forest, and during a swift march of many hours not a word was spoken; now and then he paused as a startled deer rustled through the thicket, and once or twice, when a stray moonbeam, forcing its way through the foliage, silvered the bark of the sycamore, he cast his eye upwards, as if to learn from the leaves the direction of the wind, or to scan the heaven in search of one of those stars, which the imperfect, but sagacious astronomy of the Indians teaches them to recognise as guides.

Leave we them to pursue their dark and circuitous path, and let us transport the reader to the interior of the Delaware encampment, where (as it may be remembered) Bearskin was left in command of that portion of the white men who had not accompanied their leader in pursuit of the Sioux.

Paul Müller sat late at night in the tent of the Prairie-bird; on the rude table lay the Bible from which he had been reading, and explaining some difficulties that had perplexed her strong, yet inquiring mind; afterwards they had turned the conversation to the scenes which had occurred within the last few days, and which were calculated to inspire serious anticipations of coming evil. Prairie-bird made no effort to conceal from her affectionate instructor how entirely her heart was given to Reginald; she knew his bold and fearless disposition; she knew, too, the wily cunning of the powerful tribe against whom his expedition was undertaken, and more than one heavy sigh escaped her when she thought of the risks that he must incur.

The good Missionary employed every possible argument to allay her fears, but none so effectively as that which referred to the protection of that Being who had been from childhood her hope, her trust, and her shield, and, bidding her good night, he had the pleasure of seeing her agitated spirit resume its usual composure. He then wrapped his cloak round his shoulders, and went out to see what provision Bearskin had made for the security of the camp, during the absence of Reginald, War-Eagle, and their party. The rough old boatman was smoking his pipe over the embers of a fire in front of the lodge where he slept; beside him lay, half-asleep, the gigantic Mike Smith; and the other white men were within the lodge, each having his rifle within reach and his knife and pistols in his belt. Bearskin returned the greeting of the Missionary with blunt civility, and informed him that he had been to the lodge of Tamenund, where it had been agreed to throw forward an outpost of a dozen light, active young Indians, half a mile beyond the camp, in the direction of the Sioux; runners had also been sent round to desire the warriors to be ready, and all the usual precautions taken, such as are observed by Indians in the neighbourhood of a dangerous enemy.

Satisfied with these arrangements, Paul Müller returned to his tent, and throwing himself on the pile of buffalo skins that formed his bed, was soon fast asleep. He knew not how long he had slept, when he was aroused by a cry such as none who has once heard it can mistake or forget. Scarcely had that shrill and savage whoop pierced the dull silence of the night, when every creature within the encampment sprang to their feet the braves and warriors, seizing their weapons, rushed to the quarter whence the cry proceeded, while the women and children, crowding round the aged and defenceless men, waited in suspense the result of the sudden and fierce attack. The noise and the tumult came from the northern quarter, that most remote from the lodges of Tamenund and Prairie-bird. Sixty of the chosen Osage warriors had fallen upon the small outpost placed to give the alarm, and, driving them easily before them and killing some, entered the camp almost simultaneously with the survivors. This band was led by that daring young warrior before introduced to the reader under the name of Flying-Arrow, who now burned with desire to render his name in the war-annals of his tribe famous as that of his kinsman Mahéga. Nor were the Delaware warriors slow to meet the invaders, with a courage equal to their own; the conflict was fierce and confused, for the moon was no longer up, and the pale stars were contending, in a cloudy sky, with the dim grey hue that precedes the dawn of day, so that the dusky figures of the combatants were scarcely visible, and by their voices alone could they distinguish friends from foes.

At the first alarm, Bearskin, with his habitual coolness, ordered Mike Smith, with three of his men, to retire into the rear, to assist in protecting the lodge of Tamenund and the tent of Prairie-bird, while he led the remainder to check the advance of the Osages from the northward. For some time the latter seemed to be gaining ground, but the Delawares, still superior in number and hastening to the spot, aided by Bearskin and his followers, recovered their lost advantage, and the combat raged with renewed fury.

At this crisis Mahéga, who had succeeded in gaining, unperceived, the valley to the southward of the Delaware camp, fell upon their rear with his reserve of forty men; overthrowing all who opposed him, he forced his way towards the white tent, which the advancing light of dawn rendered now easily distinguishable from the dark-coloured lodges around it; shouting his battle-cry with a voice like a trumpet, he rushed

onward, caring not, apparently, for the scalps or trophies, but determined on securing the prize for which he had already broken his faith, and imbrued his hands in the blood of allies who had done him no injury. A gallant band of Delawares surrounded their aged chief, whose trembling hand now grasped a tomahawk that had for twenty years reposed idly in his belt. Prairie-bird had sprung from her couch, and already joined in the brief, but earnest prayer, which Paul Müller breathed at her side; he recognised the Osage war-cry, and divining the chief object of their terrible leader, he whispered solemnly to her,

"My dear child, if I am soon taken from you, keep, nevertheless, your trust in God. I see that knife still in your girdle; I know what you have once dared; if it be the will of Heaven, you must be prepared patiently to endure pain, sorrow, confinement, or oppression; remember, it is only as the last resource against dishonour, that you may have recourse to it."

The maiden replied not, but a glance from her dark eye assured him that he was understood, and would be obeyed; many emotions contended in her bosom, but, for the moment, reverence and attachment to her affectionate instructor prevailed over all others, and, dropping on her knees before him, she covered his hand with kisses, saying,

"Dear Father, if we must be separated, bless, bless your grateful child."

The worthy Missionary, albeit accustomed to resign himself entirely to the will of Heaven, could scarcely command himself sufficiently to utter aloud the blessing that he implored upon her head; but the shouts and cries of the combatants were every moment approaching nearer, and seizing his staff, he went to the aperture in front of the lodge, in order to ascertain how the tide of conflict was turning.

The first object that met his view was the aged Tamenund, who had fallen in his hurried endeavour to rush to the combat, but was now partly supported and partly detained by his wailing wives and daughters, while the tomahawk that had dropped from his nerveless arm lay upon the ground beside him; as soon as he saw Paul Müller, he called him, and said, in a low voice,

"The breath of Tamenund is going; he has lived long enough; the voices of his fathers are calling to him from the far hunting-fields; he will go, and pray the Great Spirit to give the scalps of these snake-tongued Washashe to the knife of War-Eagle." After a moment's pause, the old man continued: "I know that the heart of the Black Father is good to the Lenapé; he has been a friend of many days to the lodge of Tamenund; he must be a father to Olitipa; she is a sweet-scented flower; the Great Spirit has given rain and sunshine to nourish its growth, and its roots are deep in Tamenund's heart; the Black Father will not allow it to be trodden under the feet of Mahéga." While saying these words he drew from under his blanket a small cathern bag the neck of which was carefully closed with ligaments of deer-sinew that had been dipped in wax, or some similarly adhesive substance. "This," he added, "is the medicine-bag of Olitipa; the Black Father must keep it when Tamenund is gone, and, while it is safe, the steps of the Bad Spirit will not draw near her."

The Missionary took the bag, and concealed it immediately under his vest, but, before he had time to reply to his aged friend, a terrific cry announced that the Osages had succeeded in breaking through the Delaware ranks, and a fearful scene of confusion, plunder, and massacre ensued; the faithful Missionary hastened to the side of his trembling pupil, resolved to die in defending her from injury, while the air was rent by the shouts of the victors, and the yells and shrieks of those suffering under their relentless fury.

Mike Smith and his men plied their weapons with determined courage and resolution, and several of the Osages paid with their lives the forfeit of their daring attack; still the survivors pressed forward, bearing back the white men by force of numbers, and allowing not a moment for the reloading of the fire-arms. The voice of Mahéga rose high above the surrounding din, and all seemed to shrink from the terrible weapon which he wielded as if it had been a light cane or small-sword; it was a short bludgeon, headed with a solid ball of iron, from which protruded several sharp iron spikes, already red with human blood. Mike Smith came boldly forward to meet him, holding in his left hand a discharged horse-pistol, and in his right a heavy cutlass, with which last he made a furious cut at the advancing Osage. The wary chief neither received nor parried it, but, springing lightly aside, seized the same moment for driving his heavy mace full on the unguarded forehead of his opponent, and the unfortunate woodsman dropped like an ox felled at the shambles; the fierce Indian, leaping forward, passed his knife twice through the prostrate body, and tearing off the scalp, waved the bloody trophy over his head.

Disheartened by the fall of their brave and powerful companion, the remaining white men offered but a feeble resistance, and the Osage chief rushed onwards to the spot where only some wounded Delawares and a few devoted and half-armed youths were gathered around the aged Tamenund, determined to die at his side. It is not necessary to pursue the sickening details of the narrative.

The old man received his death-blow with a composed dignity worthy of his race, and his faithful followers met their fate with equal heroism, neither expecting nor receiving mercy.

The victory was now complete, and both the scattered Delawares and the remaining white men fled for shelter and safety to the nearest points in the dense line of forest; few, if any, would have reached it had not the war-pipe of Mahéga called his warriors around him. None dared to disobey the signal, and in a few minutes they stood before him in front of the tent within which the faithful Missionary still cheered and supported his beloved pupil. The fierce Osage, counting over his followers, found that fifteen were killed or mortally wounded; but the loss on the part of their opponents was much heavier, without reckoning upwards of a score of prisoners, whose hands and legs were tightly fastened with bands of withy and elm-bark.

Mahéga, putting his head into the aperture of the tent, ordered Paul Müller to come forth.

"Resistance is unavailing," whispered the Missionary to the weeping girl; "it will be harder with thee if I obey not this cruel man. Practice now, dear child, the lessons that we have so often read together, and leave the issue to Him who has promised never to leave nor forsake those who trust in him."

So saying, he kissed her forehead, and gently disengaging himself from the hand that still clung to his garment, he went forth from the tent, and stood before Mahéga.

That wily chief was well aware that both the Missionary and his fair pupil had many warm friends among his own tribe; there was, in fact, scarcely a family among them that had not experienced from one or both some act of charity or kindness; he had resolved, therefore, to treat them without severity, and, while he assured himself of the person of Olitipa, to send her instructor to some distant spot, where neither his advice nor his reproofs were to be feared. With this determination he addressed him briefly, as follows:

"The Black Father will travel with my young men towards the east; he is no longer wanted here; he may seek the lodges of the Lenape squaws beyond the Great River; he may advise them to remain where they are, to dig and grow corn, and not to come near the hunting-fields of the Washashe. My young men will travel three days with him; they may meet strangers; if he is silent, his life is safe; if he speaks, their tomahawk drinks his blood; when they have left him, his tongue and his feet are free. I have spoken."

Mahéga added a few words in a lower tone to the young warrior who was to execute his orders, and who, with two others, now stood by his prisoner; there was a lowering frown on the brow of the chief, and a deep meaning in his tone, showing plainly that there would be danger in disobeying the letter of those commands.

Paul Müller, advancing a few steps, addressed the chief in the Delaware tongue, with which he knew him to be familiar. "Mahéga is a great chief, and the Black Father is weak, and must obey him; before he goes he will speak some words which the chief must lock up in his heart. He loves Olitipa; he wishes to make her his wife; it may be, after a season, that she may look kindly upon him; but she is not like other maidens: she is under the care of the Great Spirit. Mahéga is strong, but her medicine is stronger. She can hide the moon behind a cloud, and gather the fire of the sun as the daughters of the Washashe gather the river-waters in a vessel; let the chief remember the Black Father's last words. If Mahéga protects Olitipa and what belongs to her in the tent, it may be better for him when the Great Spirit is angry; if he offers her harm or insult, he will die like a dog, and wolves will pick his bones."

The Missionary delivered this warning with a dignity and solemnity so earnest, that the eye of the fierce but superstitious savage quailed before him; and, pleased to mark the effect of his words, Paul Müller turned and left the spot, muttering, in his own tongue, to himself, "God will doubtless forgive my endeavour to protect, through this artifice, a forlorn and friendless maiden, left in the hands of a man so cruel and unscrupulous."

In a few minutes the good Missionary had completed the slight preparation requisite for his journey, and, accompanied by his Indian escort, left the ruined and despoiled village with a heavy heart.

As soon as Mahéga was somewhat recovered from the startling effect of Paul Müller's parting address, he made his dispositions for the further movements of his band with his usual rapidity and decision; he was well aware that his position was now one of great peril, that in a short time War-Eagle and his party would be informed of all that had passed, and would seek a bloody revenge; he knew also that some of the fugitive Whites or Delawares might speedily arm a body of the inhabitants of the frontier against him, and that he would be altogether unable to maintain himself in the region that he now occupied.

Under these circumstances he made up his own mind as to the course that he would pursue; and having first given all the necessary orders for the burial of the Osage dead and the care of the wounded, as well as for the security of the prisoners, he called together the heads of his party, and, having laid before them his plans, asked their advice, with a tone and manner probably resembling that with which, a few years later, Napoleon was in the habit of asking the counsel of his generals and captains: a tone indicating that his course being already determined, nothing was expected of them but compliance.

CHAPTER XXVI.

War-Eagle and Reginald, with their Party, pursue the Dahcotahs.

We left Reginald, and War-Eagle's party, in pursuit of the marauding band of Sioux horse-stealers. They continued their toilsome march with unabated speed until nightfall, when the trail was no longer distinguishable: they then halted, and while they ate a scanty supper, the mounted Delawares, who had been sent forward, returned, bringing with them two wearied horses which had escaped, in the hurried flight, from their captors.

War-Eagle, summoning Baptiste to his side, questioned the young man closely as to the appearance and direction of the trail. From their answers he learnt that its course was northward, but that it bore gradually towards the east, especially after a brief halt, which the Sioux had made for refreshments; a gleam shot athwart the dusky features of the young chief at this intelligence, but he made no observation, and contented himself with asking the opinion of his more experienced companion.

The Guide, taking off his hunting-cap, allowed the evening breeze to play through the grisly hairs which were scattered, not too plentifully, on his weather-beaten forehead, as if his reflective powers might thence derive refreshment; but, apparently, the expedient was not, at least on this occasion, rewarded with success, for after meditating in silence for a few seconds, he shook his head and owned that he saw no clue to the intentions of the party whom they were pursuing. The young chief had his eye still bent upon the ground, seemingly employed in observing a large rent, which the day's march had made in his mocassin; but the woodsman read in the lines of his intelligent countenance that the mind was busily engaged in following a connected train of thought.

After allowing a few minutes to pass in silence, the Guide, addressing his companion, said, "Can War-Eagle see the Dahcotah path? It is hid from the eyes of Grand-Hâche."

"The night is dark, and the eyes cannot see the trail; but the wolf finds his way to the

wounded bison, and the blue dove keeps her course to her nest in the mountain. The Great Spirit has not made the Lenape warrior more ignorant than the bird, or the brute; War-Eagle knows the path of the Dahcotah dogs." He then bent down towards the ear of Baptiste, and whispered to him long and earnestly in the Delaware tongue.

"Capote-blue! but the boy is right," exclaimed the Guide, in his own mixed dialect; "the dogs have only taken this northern start to mislead us; they are not making for the Missouri river, but intend to double back and join their village, now lying to the eastward of us. The boy is right; my brain must be getting as worn-out as my hunting shirt, or I should have understood their drift. I see his plan is to lie in cash* for them on their return. Well, if he can make sure of his game, I will say that he's fit to be a war-chief, for these Sioux have a long start, and the village must be many miles to the right."

As he made these reflections half aloud, Reginald caught their general bearing; and though he had great confidence in the sagacity of his Indian friends, still he felt a chill of disappointment at the idea that the pursuit was to be abandoned, for what appeared to him the hopeless chance of intercepting a small band of Sioux of whose course they were ignorant, in a boundless extent of prairie like that around him. He had, however, good sense enough to conceal all traces of his disappointment, knowing that on such an expedition there can be but one leader, and that, without unanimity and discipline, failure must ensue.

War-Eagle now called one of the young Lenape warriors to his side, and gave him brief instructions to the effect, that he was to choose three others of the best runners of the party, and accompanied by the mounted Indians, to start with the earliest dawn on the Dahcotah trail, which they were to follow as close as possible without discovering themselves. He then desired Reginald and Baptiste to divide the band into watches, and to sleep alternately, but not to move until he returned.

Having given these few directions, without allowing himself either food or rest after a march of so many hours, he drew his belt tighter around his loins, and started on his solitary excursion. Reginald watched the retreating figure of his friend until it was lost in the deepening gloom, and turning to the Guide he said,

"Baptiste, I cannot but envy War-Eagle the possession of sinews that seem unconscious of fatigue, and eyes that require no slumber! We have marched from daylight until this late hour without either rest or refreshment, and I confess I am very glad of this seat on my buffalo-robe, and this slice of dried venison, with a draught of water; War-Eagle, however, walks off into the prairie, as if he had just started fresh from repose, and Heaven only knows where, or for what purpose he is going."

"Master Reginald," replied the Guide, throwing himself lazily down by the side of his young leader; "I will not deny that War-Eagle's sinews are strung like the bow of a Pawnee, for I have been on a trail with him before, and few could follow it so long or so true; but there has been a time," he added, casting his eyes down on his worn and soiled leggins, "when these limbs of mine would have kept me for a week at the heels of the fleetest Dahcotah that ever crossed the country of the Stone-eaters.† Those days are gone, but when the game's afoot, perhaps there may be younger men who might give out before old Baptiste, yet."

As he spoke the eye of the Guide rested with a comic grin on Monsieur Perrot, who, with a countenance somewhat rueful, was endeavouring to masticate a crude pomme de prairie† that one of the Delawares had given to him, with the assurance that it was "very good!"

"I believe you, Baptiste," said Reginald, humouring the old hunter's pardonable vanity; "I believe you, indeed, and if the Sioux offer us a long chase, as appears likely, the crack of your rifle will be heard before the foremost of our party has come to close quarters with them; but you have not answered my question relative to War-Eagle's excursion during this dark night."

"He is gone," replied the Guide, "to examine the ground carefully, perhaps even to approach the northern border of the Dahcotah encampment; he will then judge of the route by which these horse-stealing vagabonds are likely to return, and will choose a place for us to conceal ourselves for an attack."

"I understand it all, Baptiste; it seems to be a bold, well-devised plan, if War-Eagle is only correct in his guess at their intentions; meanwhile let us post our sentries, and get what sleep we can, for to-morrow may be a busy day."

They accordingly divided their party into watches, Baptiste and Perrot with one Indian taking the first, and Reginald undertaking the charge of the second. The night was gloomy, and few stars were visible through the thick clouds by which the heavens were overspread; the men were partially sheltered by some stunted alder-bushes which grew by the side of the stream, with whose waters they had cooled their thirst, and those who were not destined to the first watch soon fell asleep, lulled by the distant howling of a hungry pack of prairie wolves.

Towards the close of Reginald's watch, about an hour before daybreak, a dusky figure glided with noiseless step towards the encampment; the young man cocked his rifle, in order to be prepared against surprise, but in the next moment recognized the commanding form of his friend, and hailed him by name.

"Netis!" replied the chief, sitting down beside him, and wringing the water from his leggins, which had been saturated partly by the heavy dew on the long grass through which he had made his way, and partly by the streams which he had been obliged to ford.

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* *An expression* used by the Canadian hunters for an ambush; *the "cache" is* also familiar to all readers of western story, *as the place of deposit* for peltries or stores.

* The country of the Stone-eaters, or, as they are called in their own language, the Assineboins. This is a branch of the Great Sioux tribe to the northward of the Missouri river; the region is peculiarly wild and broken, and the Indians inhabiting it are famous for their pedestrian activity and endurance.

† Pommes de prairie are small roots, somewhat resembling white radishes, that are found in great abundance in the Western Wilderness, being in some places the only esculent vegetable within a range of several hundred miles; when eaten raw they are tough, tasteless, and hard of digestion, but if boiled or stewed, are tolerably palatable and wholesome.

"Has my brother found a path?" inquired Reginald in a whisper; "has he been near the Dahcotah village?"

"He has," replied the chief; "he has seen their lodges."

"Can my brother find the path by which the horse-stealers will return?"

"He can guess, he cannot be sure," replied the young Indian, modestly.

Here the conversation closed, and in a few minutes the little party were aroused and a-foot, their leader being resolved that not a moment should be lost, as soon as there was sufficient light for pursuing the trail.

When on the point of starting, Baptiste, taking War-Eagle aside, whispered in his ear a few words, on which the latter appeared to reflect seriously and somewhat in doubt; he nodded his head, however, and replied, "Well, it is good."

The Guide informed Reginald that at his own request he was to accompany the party on the trail.

"You see, Master Reginald," he continued, "I am a true-scented old hound, and if these young ones run too fast, I may perhaps help 'em at a pinch; then if we catch the scoundrels you will be in their front and we in their rear, and they will be as bad off as a Kentucky coon between two of old Dan Boone's cur-dogs. Remember the signals," he added impressively, touching the bugle slung across his shoulder. "We have not practised them of late, but I have forgot none of them; they may do us a good turn here; stick close to War-Eagle, you are sworn brothers, and, according to Indian fashion, if he falls you must die with him or revenge him."

"That will I, honest Baptiste," replied our hero; "the Lenapé shall not say that their chief was deserted by his adopted brother, neither will I forget the signals—farewell!"

Here the two parties separated, that of Baptiste resuming their pursuit of the trail, and that of War-Eagle following in silence the rapid strides of their young chief across the prairie to the eastward. He marched for several hours in silence—his brow wore an expression of thoughtfulness, and he stopped several times as if to scan the bearing and the distance of every remarkable elevation or object in the undulating prairie which they were crossing. It was now about midday; they had walked since daybreak without halt or food; the rays of the sun were fiercely hot, and it required all the determined energy of Reginald's character, to enable him to endure in silence the heat and thirst by which he was oppressed; as for Monsieur Perrot, he had contrived to secrete a small flask of brandy about his person, more than one mouthful of which, mingled with the muddy water of the pools which they passed had hitherto enabled him to keep pace with the rest of the party, but he was now beginning to lag behind, and some of the Indians were obliged to urge and assist him forward.

At this juncture War-Eagle suddenly stopped, and uttering a sound like a low hiss, crouched upon the ground, an attitude into which the whole party sunk in a moment. Laying a finger lightly on Reginald's arm, he pointed to the upper range of a distant hill, saying, "There are men!" Our hero, shading his eyes with his hand, looked in the direction indicated, but after a careful survey, he could see nothing but the faint green reposing in the sunny haze of noon; he shook his head; but War-Eagle replied with a quiet smile,

"My brother saw the rifles behind the log near the Muskingum; his eyes are very true, but they have not looked much at the prairie; let him use his medicine glass-pipe."

When Reginald had adjusted his telescope, he looked again to the spot on which the bright clear eye of War-Eagle was still rivetted like the gaze of a Highland deer hound, who has caught sight of a hart browsing on the further side of some wide and rocky glen.

"By heaven, it is true!" he exclaimed. "I see them, one, two, three, mounted Indians; they are at speed—and buffalo are galloping before them."

"That is good," said War-Eagle; "keep the glass-pipe before them, and say if they go out of sight, or if more appear."

Reginald did so: and after a few minutes, reported that they had disappeared over a neighbouring height, and that no others had come in view.

Upon this, War-Eagle rose, saying, "My brother shall drink and rest—there are shade and water not far." As he had said, half an hour's march brought them to a clump of stunted alders, beside which flowed a stream, the waters of which were tolerably fresh and cool, Here they ate some dried buffalo meat, and satisfied their thirst, after which they followed with renewed spirits their gay leader, whose iron and sinewy frame seemed (like that of Antæus of old) to gather fresh strength every time that his foot fell upon the earth. The prairie through which they now passed was extremely hilly and broken, intersected by many steep and narrow ravines; threading his way amongst these, the chief frequently stopped to examine the footmarks which had been left by bison, or other animals, and often bent his searching glance along the sides of the hills around him. The only living creatures seen during the whole march were a few bulls, lazily cropping the prairie grass, as if conscious that their tough carcase, and burnt, soiled hides, rendered them at this season worthless to the hunters, who had driven from them the cows and the younger bulls of the herd. Emerging from these defiles, the party came to a broader valley, the sides of which were very steep; along the bottom ran a stream of considerable magnitude, on the banks of which was a large tract of copsewood, consisting apparently of alder, poplar, and birch, and affording ample space for concealing a body of several hundred men.

Towards this wood, War-Eagle led the way; and when he reached a few bushes distant from it some hundred yards, he desired the rest of the party lie still, while he went forward alone to explore. During his absence, Reginald occupied himself with examining through his glass the sides of the valley, but could see neither man nor any other living creature; and when War-Eagle returned and conducted them into the wood, Reginald could read on his friend's countenance that he was in high spirits at having reached this point undiscovered.

When they came to the centre of the wood-land, they found a broad trail, near which they were carefully posted by the chief, in such a manner that, themselves unseen, they could command a view of any one passing along it.

The party led by Baptiste was not less successful in carrying out the instructions given to them by War-Eagle. After a rapid and toilsome march of many hours upon the Dahcotah trail, they came at length in sight of their enemies; although at a distance of many miles, the prudence and caution of the experienced scout controlled the impetuous ardour of the young Delawares, who were burning to revenge the insult offered to their tribe. But Baptiste was aware that to attack with his present force would be hopeless, and he bent all his energies to creep as near to the Sioux as possible, so that he might be ready to dash in upon their rear, in case he should find that the ambuscade of War-Eagle was successfully laid; at the same time, the hardy woodsman was determined not to allow them, under any circumstances, to gain the village without making by day or by night one bold effort for recovery of the horses.

A habit of self-control was one of the distinguishing features of the Guide's character; and although his hatred of the Sioux was fierce and intense, as we have seen in the earlier part of this tale, he now conducted his operations with a cool deliberation that might almost have been mistaken for indifference; selecting the most intelligent warrior among the Lenapé, he sent him forward to creep on the trail; he himself followed at a short distance; then the other runners at short intervals, and the mounted Indians were desired to keep entirely out of sight in the rear. In this order they continued the pursuit; and by the skilful selection of ground, and taking advantage of every trifling hill or ravine over which they passed, he contrived at length to approach as near as he deemed it prudent to venture until he should see the result of the stratagem devised by War-Eagle

CHAPTER XXVII

A deserted village in the West.—Mahega carries off Prairie-bird, and endeavours to baffle pursuit.

We must now shift the scene to the spot where the Delaware village had been encamped. What a change had a few days produced! The lodges of the chiefs, with their triangular poles bearing their shields and trophies; the white tent of Prairie-bird, the busy crowds of women and children; the troops of horses, the songs and dances of the warriors—all were gone! and in their stead nothing was to be seen but a flock of buzzards, gorging themselves on a meal too revolting to be described, and a pack of wolves snarling and quarrelling over the remains of the unfortunate Lenape victims.

On the very spot where the tent of Olitipa had been pitched, and where the marks of the tent poles were still easily recognised, stood a solitary Indian, in an attitude of deep musing; his ornamented hunting shirt and leggins, proclaimed his chieftain rank; the rifle on which he leaned was of the newest and best workmanship, and his whole appearance was singularly *striking;* but the countenance was that which *would have rivetted the* attention of a spectator, had any been there to look upon it, for it blended in its gentle, yet proud lineaments, a delicate beauty almost feminine, with a high heroic sternness, that one could scarcely have thought it possible to find in a youth only just emerging from boyhood: there was too a deep silent expression of grief, rendered yet more touching by the fortitude with which it was controlled and repressed. Drear and desolate as was the scene around, the desolation of that young heart was yet greater; father, brother, friend! the beloved sister, the affectionate instructor; worst of all, the tribe, the ancient people of whose chiefs he was the youngest and last surviving scion, all swept away at "one full swoop!" And yet no tear fell from his eyes, no murmur escaped his lip, and the energies of that heroic, though youthful spirit, rose above the tempest, whose fearful ravages he now contemplated with stern and gloomy resolution.

In this sketch the reader will recognize Wingenund, who had been absent, as was mentioned in a former chapter, on a course of watching and fasting, preparatory to his being enrolled among the band of warriors, according to the usages of his nation. Had he been in the camp when the attack of the Osages was made, there is little doubt that his last drop of blood would have there been shed before the lodge of Tamenund, but he had retired to a distance, whence the war cry and the tumult of the fight never reached his ear, and had concluded his self-denying probation with a dream of happy omen; a dream that promised future glory, dear to every ambitious Indian spirit, and in which the triumphs of war were wildly and confusedly blended with the sisterly tones of Olitipa's voice, and the sweet smile of the Lily of Mooshanne.

Inspired by his vision, the ardent boy returned in high hopes and spirits towards the encampment, but when he gained the summit of a hill which overlooked it, a single glance sufficed to show him the destruction that had been wrought during his absence; he saw that the lodges were overthrown, the horses driven off, and that the inhabitants of the moving village were either dispersed or destroyed. Rooted to the spot, he looked on the scene in speechless horror, when all at once his attention was caught by a body of men moving over a distant height in the western horizon, their figures being rendered visible by the deep red background afforded by the setting sun: swift as thought the youth darted off in pursuit.

After the shades of night had fallen, the retreating party halted, posted their sentries, lit their camp-fires, and knowing that nothing was to be feared from an enemy so lately and so totally overthrown, they cooked their meat and their maize, and smoked their pipes, with the lazy indifference habitual to Indian warriors when the excitement of the chase or the fight has subsided. In the centre of the camp rose a white tent, and beside it a kind of temporary arbour had been hastily constructed from reeds and alderboughs; beneath the latter reclined the gigantic form of Mahéga, stretched at his length and puffing out volumes of *kinnekenic**

* A mixture used for smoking by the Indians of the Missouri; it is usually composed of tobacco, dried sumach leaf, and the inner bark of the white willow, cut small and mixed in nearly equal proportions

moke, with the self-satisfied complacency of success.

Within the tent sat Prairie-bird, her eyes meekly raised to heaven, her hands crossed upon her bosom, and a small basket of corn-cakes being placed, untasted, upon the ground beside her; at a little distance, in the corner of the tent, sate her female Indian attendant, whom Mahéga had permitted, with a delicacy and consideration scarcely to be expected from him, to share her mistress's captivity. He had also given orders that all the lighter articles belonging to her toilet, and to the furniture of her tent, should be conveyed with the latter, so that as yet both her privacy and her comfort had been faithfully secured.

Guided by the fires, Wingenund, who had followed with unabated speed, had no difficulty in finding the Osage encampment; neither was his intelligent mind at a loss to apprehend what had occurred; he had long known the views and plans entertained by Mahéga respecting Prairie-bird, and when, from a distant eminence he caught a sight of her white tent pitched in the centre of a retreating Indian band, he understood in a moment her present situation, and the disastrous events that had preceded it; although he believed that both War-Eagle and Reginald must have fallen ere his sister had been made a captive, he resolved at all hazards to communicate with her, and either to rescue her or die in the attempt.

Having been so long encamped with the Osages, he was tolerably well versed in their language, and he also knew so well the general disposition of their outposts that he had no doubt of being able to steal into their camp. As soon as he had gained, undiscovered, the shelter of a clump of alders, only a few bowshots distant from the nearest fire, he stripped off and concealed his hunting shirt, cap, leggins, and other accoutrements, retaining only his belt, in which he hid a small pocket-pistol, lately given to him by Reginald, and his scalp-knife, sheathed in a case of bison-hide. Thus lightly armed, he threw himself upon the grass, and commenced creeping like a serpent towards the Osage encampment.

Unlike the sentries of civilized armies, those of the North American Indians frequently sit at their appointed station, and trust to their extraordinary quickness of sight and hearing to guard them against surprise. Ere he had crept many yards, Wingenund found himself near an Indian, seated with his back against the decayed stump of a tree, and whiling away his watch by humming a low and melancholy Osage air; fortunately, the night was dark, and the heavy dew had so softened the grass, that the boy's pliant and elastic form wound its onward way without the slightest noise being made to alarm the lazy sentinel. Having passed this outpost in safety, he continued his snaky progress, occasionally raising his head to glance his quick eye around and observe the nature of the obstacles that he had yet to encounter; these were less than he expected, and he contrived at length to trail himself to the back of Olitipa's tent, where he ensconced himself unperceived under cover of a large buffalo skin, which was loosely thrown over her saddle to protect it from the weather. His first object was to scoop out a few inches of the turf below the edge of the tent, in order that he might conveniently hear or be heard by her without raising his voice above the lowest whisper.

After listening attentively for a few minutes, a gentle and regular breathing informed him that one sleeper was within; but Wingenund whose sharp eyes had already observed that there were two saddles under the buffalo robe which covered him, conjectured that her attendant was now her companion in captivity, and that the grief and anxiety of Olitipa had probably banished slumber from her eyes. To resolve these doubts, and to effect the purpose of his dangerous attempt, he now applied his mouth to the small opening that he had made at the back of the tent, and gave a low and almost inaudible sound from his lips like the chirping of a cricket. Low as it was, the sound escaped not the quick ear of Olitipa, who turned and listened more intently,—again it was repeated, and the maiden felt a sudden tremour of anxiety pervade her whole frame, as from an instinctive consciousness that the sound was a signal intended for her ear.

Immediately in front of the lodge were stretched the bulky forms of two half slumbering Osages. She knew that the dreaded Mahéga was only a few paces distant, and that if some friend were indeed near, the least indiscretion on her part might draw down upon him certain destruction: but she was courageous by nature, and habit had given her presence of mind. Being aware that few, if any, of her captors spoke the English tongue, she said, in a low, but distinct voice, "If a friend is near, let me hear the signal again!"

Immediately the cricket-chirrup was repeated. Convinced now beyond a doubt that friendly succour was nigh, the maiden's heart throbbed with hope, fear, and many contending emotions, but she lost not her self-possession; and having now ascertained the spot whence the sound proceeded, she moved the skins which formed her couch to that part of the tent, and was thus enabled to rest her head within a few inches of the opening made by Wingenund below the canvass.

"Prairie-bird," whispered a soft voice close to her ear, a voice that she had a thousand times taught to pronounce her name, and every accent of which was familiar to her ear.

"My brother!" was the low-breathed reply.

"If the Washashe do not hear, let my sister tell all, in few words."

As Prairie-bird briefly described the events above-narrated, Wingenund found some comfort in the reflection that War-Eagle, Reginald, and their band had escaped the destruction which had overwhelmed the Lenapé village: when she concluded, he replied,

"It is enough, let my sister hope; let her speak fair words to Mahéga—Wingenund will find his brothers, they will follow the trail, my sister must not be afraid; many days and nights may pass, but the Lenapé will be near her, and Netis will be with them. Wingenund must go."

How fain was Prairie-bird to ask him a thousand questions, to give him a thousand cautions, and to send as many messages by him to her lover; but, trained in the severe school of the

dian discipline, she knew that every word spoken or whispered increased the danger already incurred by Wingenund, and in obedience to his hint she contented herself with silently invoking the blessing of Heaven on the promised attempt to be made by himself and his beloved coadjutors for her rescue.

That pale-faced maiden speaks to herself all through the night," said one of the Osage warriors to his comrade stretched beside him before the tent.

"I heard a sort of murmuring sound," replied the other; "but I shut my ears. Mahéga says that her words are like the voices of spirits; it is not good to listen! Before this moon is older I will ask her to curse Pâketshu, that Pawnee wolf who killed my two brothers near the Nebraske."*

Profiting by this brief dialogue, Wingenund crept from under the buffalo skin, and looking carefully around to see whether any new change had taken place since his concealment, he found that several of the Osage warriors, who had been probably eating together, were now stretched around the tent, and it was hopeless to attempt passing so many cunning and vigilant foes undiscovered. While he was meditating on the best course to be pursued, his attention was called to a noise immediately in front of the tent, which was caused by the horse ridden by Olitipa having broken from its tether and entangled its legs in the halter. Springing on his feet, Wingenund seized the leather thong, using at the same time the expressions common among the Osages for quieting a fractious horse.

"What is it?" exclaimed at once several of the Osage warriors, half raising themselves from their recumbent posture.

"Nothing," replied Wingenund, in their own tongue; "the pale-faced squaw's horse has got loose."

So saying he stooped leisurely down, and fastened the laryette again to the iron pin, from which it had been detached. Having secured the horse, he stood up again, and stepped coolly over several of the Osages stretched around the tent; and they, naturally mistaking him for one of their own party, composed themselves again to sleep. Thus he passed through the encampment, when he again threw himself upon the ground, and again succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the outposts, and in reaching safely the covert where he had left his rifle and his accoutrements.

The active spirit of Wingenund was not yet wearied of exertion. Seeing that the course taken by the Osages was westerly, he went forward in that direction, and having ascended an elevated height commanding a view of the adjoining valleys, he concealed himself with the intention of watching the enemy's march.

On the following morning the Osages started at daybreak, and marched until noon, when Mahéga halted them, and put in execution the plan that he had formed for throwing off any pursuit that might be attempted. He had brought four horses from the Delaware encampment; of these he retained two for the use of Prairie-bird and her attendant, and ordered their hoofs to be covered with thick wrappers of bison hide;* he selected also ten of the warriors, on whose courage and fidelity he could best depend; the remainder of the band he dismissed, under the conduct of the Flying-arrow, with the remaining two horses laden with a portion of the Delaware spoils and trophies, desiring them to strike off to the northward, and making a trail as distinct as possible, to return by a circuitous march to the Osage village. These orders were punctually obeyed, and Mahéga, having seen the larger moiety of his band start on their appointed route, led off his own small party in a south-westerly direction, through the hardest and roughest surface that the prairie afforded, where he rightly judged that their trail could with difficulty be followed, even by the lynx-eyed chief of the Delawares.

From his concealment in the distance, Wingenund observed the whole manœuvre; and having carefully noted the very spot where the two trails separated, he ran back to the deserted Lenape village to carry out the plan that he had formed for the pursuit. On his way he gathered a score of pliant willow rods, and these lay at his feet when he stood in the attitude of deep meditation, described at the commencement of this chapter. He knew that if War-Eagle and his party returned in safety from their expedition, their steps would be directed at once to the spot on which he now stood, and his first care was to convey to them all the information necessary for their guidance. This he was enabled to do by marking with his knife on slips of elm bark various figures and designs, which War-Eagle would easily understand. To describe these at length would be tedious, in a narrative such as the present; all readers who know anything of the history of the North American Indians being aware of their sagacity in the use of these rude hieroglyphics; it is sufficient here to state, that Wingenund was able to express, in a manner intelligible to his kinsman, that he himself marked the elm-bark, that Olitipa was prisoner to Mahéga, that the Osage trail was to the west; that it divided, the broad trail to the north being the wrong one; and that he would hang on the right one and make more marks for War-Eagle to follow.

Having carefully noted these particulars, he stuck one of his rods into the ground and fastened to the top of it his roll of elm-bark; then giving one more melancholy glance at the desolate scene around him, he gathered up his willow twigs, and throwing himself again upon the Osage trail, never rested his weary limbs until the burnt grass, upon a spot where the party had cooked some bison-meat, assured him that he was on their track; then he laid himself under a neighbouring bush and slept soundly, trusting to his own sagacity for following the trail over the boundless prairie before him.

* The Indians believe that some persons have the power of injuring, or even of killing others at a distance of many hundred miles, by charms and spells: this belief in witchcraft is constantly noticed by Tanner and others, who have resided long among the Indians, and it seems to have been especially prevalent among the Oggibeways and other northern tribes. In illustration of a similar notion in the eastern hemisphere, see Burrow's Zincali, or the Gypsies of Spain, vol. i. chap. ix. on the Evil Eye.

* This method of baffling pursuit is not unfrequently resorted to by Indian marauders. The reader of Shakspeare (and who that can read is not?) will remember Lear's—

"It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt!"

While these events were passing on the Missouri Prairie Paul Müller having been escorted to the settlements and set free by the Osages, pursued his way towards St. Louis, then the nucleus of Western trade, and the point whence all expeditions, whether of a warlike or commercial nature, were carried on in that region. He was walking slowly forward, revolving in his mind the melancholy changes that had taken place in the course of the last few weeks, the destruction of the Lenape band, and the captivity of his beloved pupil, when he was overtaken by a sturdy and weatherbeaten pedestrian, whose person and attire seemed to have been roughly handled of late, for his left arm was in a sling, various patches of plaster were on his face and forehead, his leggins were torn to rags, and the barrel of a rifle broken off from the stock was slung over his shoulder.

The Missionary, turning round to greet his fellow-traveller with his accustomed courtesy, encountered a countenance, which, notwithstanding its condition, he recognized as one that he had seen in the Delaware village.

"Bearskin, my good friend," said he, holding out his hand, and grasping heartily the horny fist of the voyageur, "I am right glad to see you, although it seems that you have received some severe hurts; I feared that you had fallen among the other victims of that terrible day."

"I can't deny that the day was rough enough," replied Bearskin, looking down upon his wounded arm; "and the redskin devils left only one other of my party beside myself alive; we contrived to beat off those who attacked our quarter, but when we found that Mahéga had broken in upon the rear, and had killed Mike Smith and his men, we made the best of our way to the woods, several were shot and scalped, two of us escaped; I received, as you see, a few ugly scratches, but my old carcase is accustomed to being battered, and a week will set it all to rights."

"You know," replied the Missionary, "that I have some skill in curing woulds. When we reach St. Louis we will take up our lodging in he same house, and I will do what I can to relieve your hurts. Moreover, there are many things on which I wish to speak with you at leisure, and I have friends there who will supply us with all that is needful for our comfort."

While they were thus conversing, the tall spires of the cathedral became visible over the forest, which then grew dense and unbroken to the very edge of the town, and in a few minutes Bearskin, conducted hy the Missionary was snugly lodged in the dwelling of one of the wealthiest peltry-dealers in the famous frontier city of St. Louis.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

An ambuscade.—Reginald Brandon finds his horse, and M. Perrot nearly loses his head.—While Indian Philosophy is displayed in one quarter, Indian credulity is exhibited in another.

We left War-Eagle and his party posted in a thicket of considerable extent, in the centre of a valley through which he had calculated that the marauding band of Sioux would return with the captured horses to their village; long and anxiously did he wait in expectation of their appearance; and both himself and Reginald began to fear that they must have taken some other route, when they saw at a distance an Indian, galloping down the valley towards them. as he drew near, the head-dress of eagle's feathers, the scalplocks on his leather hunting shirt, and the fringes by which his leggins were adorned, announced him to the practiced eye o the young Delaware chief, as a Dahcotah brave of some distinction; but what was the astonishment of Reginald, at recognizing in the fiery steed that bore him, his own lost Nekimi. By an unconscious movement he threw forward his rifle over the log which concealed him, and was preparing to secure a certain aim, when War-Eagle, touching his arm, whispered, "Netis not shoot, more Dahcotahs are coming,—noise of gun not good here, Netis have enough fight soon,—leave this man to War-Eagle, he give Netis back his horse."

Reginald, although disappointed at not being allowed to take vengeance on the approaching savage, saw the prudence of his friend's counsel, and suffering himself to be guided by it, waited patiently to see how the Delaware proposed to act. The latter, laying aside his rifle, and armed only with his scalp-knife and tomahawk, crept to a thick bush on the edge of the broad trail passing through the centre of the thicket; in his hand he took a worn-out mocassin, which he threw carelessly upon the track, and then ensconced himself in a hiding-place which he had selected for his purpose. The Dahcotah warrior, who had been sent forward by his chief to reconnoitre, and to whom Nekimi had been lent on account of the extraordinary speed which that animal had been found to possess, slackened his speed as he entered the thicket, and cast his wary eyes to the right and to the left, glancing occasionally at the sides of the hills which overhung the valley.

The Delawares were too well concealed to be seen from the path, and he rode slowly forward, until he came to the spot where lay the mocassin thrown down by War-Eagle.

"Ha!" said the Sioux, uttering a hasty ejaculation, and leaping from his horse to examine its fashion. As he stooped to pick it up War-Eagle sprung like a tiger upon him, and with a single blow of his tomahawk laid the unfortunate warrior dead at his feet. Throwing Nekimi's bridle over his arm, he drew the body into the adjacent thicket, and, having found in the waistband the small leathern bag in which the Indians of the Missouri usually carry the different coloured clays wherewith they paint themselves, he proceeded to transform himself into a Sioux. Putting on the Dahcotah head-dress and other apparel, aided by one of the most experienced of his band, he disguised himself in a few minutes so effectually that, unless upon a very close inspection, he might well be taken for the Indian whom he had just killed.

As soon as this operation was completed, he desired Reginald and the rest of the party to remain concealed, and if he succeeded in luring the enemy to the spot, on no account to fire until their main body had reached the bush from which he had sprung on the Sioux. Having given this instruction, he vaulted on Nekimi

ni's back, and returned at speed to the upper part of the valley, from which direction he knew that the Dahcotahs must be approaching. He had not ridden many miles ere he saw them advancing at a leisurely rate, partly driving before them, and partly leading, the horses stolen from the Delawares. This was an occasion on which War-Eagle required all his sagacity and presence of mind, for should he betray himself by a false movement or gesture, not only would the enemy escape the snare laid for them, but his life would pay the forfeit of his temerity. Wheeling his horse about, he returned towards the thicket, and, after riding to and fro, as if making a careful investigation of its paths and foot-marks, he went back to the broad trail, and as soon as the foremost of the Dahcotahs were within a couple of hundred yards, he made the signal "All right,"* and rode gently forward through the wood. So well did his party observe the orders which he had given them, that, although he knew the exact spot where they were posted, and scanned it with the most searching glance of his keen eye, not a vestige of a human figure, nor of a weapon could he detect, and a smile of triumph curled his lip as he felt assured of the success of his plan. No sooner had he passed the bush where the Dahcotah had fallen, than he turned aside into the thicket, and, having fastened Nekimi securely to a tree, tore off his Sioux disguise, and resuming his own dress and rifle, concealed himself on the flank of his party.

The Dahcotahs, who had, as they thought, seen their scout make the sign of "All right," after a careful examination of the wood, entered it without either order or suspicion; neither did they discover their mistake until the foremost reached the fatal bush, when a volley from the ambuscade told among them with terrible effect. Several of the Sioux fell at this first discharge, and the confusion caused by this unexpected attack was increased by the panic among the horses, some of which being frightened, and others wounded, they reared and plunged with ungovernable fury.

Although taken by surprise, the Dahcotah warriors behaved with determined courage; throwing themselves from their horses, they dashed into the thicket to dislodge their unseen foes, and the fight became general, as well as desultory, each man using a log or a tree for his own defence, and shooting, either with rifle or bow, at any adversary whom he could see for a moment exposed. The Sioux, though more numerous, were unprovided with efficient firearms; and sensible of the advantages thence arising to their opponents, they made desperate, and not unsuccessful efforts to bring the fight to close quarters; Reginald and War-Eagle were side by side, each endeavouring to outdo the other in feats of gallantry, and at the same time to watch over the safety of his friend.

Monsieur Perrot caught the general spirit of the affray, and, as he afterward said of himself "fought like a famished lion!" when, unluckily, his pistol snapped in the face of a Sioux warrior, who struck him a blow that felled him to the earth. Stepping lightly over the form of his prostrate foe, the savage, grasping a knife in his right hand, and seizing the luckless Frenchman's hair with his left, was about to scalp him, when the knife dropped from his hand, and he stood for a moment petrified with astonishment and horror. The whole head of hair was in his left hand, and the white man sat grinning before him with a smooth and shaven crown.

Letting fall what he believed to be the scalp of some devil in human shape, the affrighted Sioux fled from the spot, while Perrot, replacing his wig, muttered half aloud, "*Bravo! ma bonne perruque! je te dois mille remerçimens!*"

At this crisis, while the issue of the general combat was still doubtful, the sound of a bugle was heard in the distance, and the signal immediately answered by Reginald, who shouted aloud to War-Eagle, that Grande-Hâche was at hand. Inspired by the knowledge of approaching reinforcement, the Delawares fought with renewed confidence, while the Dahcotahs, startled by the strange and unknown bugle calls, were proportionately confused and thrown into disorder. The panic among them was complete when the sharp crack of Baptiste's rifle was heard in the rear, and one of their principal braves fell dead at the root of the tree which sheltered him from the fire of War-Eagle's party. Hemmed in between the two hostile bands, the Sioux now gave up all hope of concealment and fought with the courage of despair; but the resistance which they offered was neither effective nor of long duration. Baptiste, wielding his terrible axe, seemed resolved this day to wreak his fierce and long-delayed vengeance on the tribe at whose hands he had sustained such deadly injury; and regardless of several slight wounds which he received in the fray, continued to deal destruction among all who came within reach. Nor were Reginald and War-Eagle less active in the fight; the struggle was hand to hand; the Sioux seeming to expect no quarter, and being determined to fight while they could wield a knife or tomahawk.

Their chief, a man of stature almost as powerful as that of Mahéga, seemed gifted with a charmed life, for although he exposed himself freely to the boldest of his opponents, animating his men by shouting aloud the terrible war-cry of the Dahcotahs,* and rushing to their aid wherever he found them giving way, he was hitherto unhurt, and bent every effort to destroy War-Eagle, whom he easily recognised as the leader, and most formidable of the Delawares. An opportunity soon offered itself, as War-Eagle was engaged with another of the Dahcotahs. The chief aimed at his unguarded head a blow that must have proved fatal, had not Reginald warded it off with his cutlass; the Indian turned

* One of the most extraordinary specimens of the ingenuity of the tribes who inhabit the Great Missouri wilderness, and who speak many languages, so different that they can have with each other no verbal communication, is the language of Signs, common to them all, by which Pawnees, Dahcotahs, Osages, Black-feet, Upsarokas, or the Crows and other Western nations, can understand each other quite sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of *their simple life*. The sign for "all right" is made by *holding the hand with the palm downwards, in a horizontal position, and waving it slowly outwards.*

* It is well known that every tribe has its separate war-cry; that of the Dahcotah's resembles the short angry bark of a dog, but they utter it with a piercing shriek that renders it terrific in the extreme

uriously upon him, and a fierce combat ensued, but it was not of long duration, for after they had exchanged a few strokes, a successful thrust stretched the Dahcotah chief upon the ground. An exulting cry burst from the Delawares, and the panic-struck Sioux fled in every direction. The pursuit was conducted with the merciless eagerness common to Indian warfare, and as Reginald felt no inclination to join in it, he returned his cutlass to its sheath, and busied himself in securing all the horses that came within his reach.

One by one the Delawares came back to the place of rendezvous, some bearing with them the scalps which they had taken, others leading recaptured horses, and all in the highest excitement of triumph.

War-Eagle set free Nekimi, and led it towards its master. As soon as it was near enough to hear his voice, Reginald called to the noble animal, which, shaking its flowing mane, came bounding and snorting towards him. He caressed it for a short time, then vaulted upon its back, and was delighted to find that its spirit and strength had suffered no diminution since its capture. Again he dismounted, and Nekimi followed him unled, playing round him like a favorite dog. While he thus amused himself with his recovered steed, Baptiste sat by the side of a small streamlet, cleaning his axe and his rifle, and listening with a grim smile to Monsieur Perrot's account of the danger from which he had been saved by his peruke. In the midst of his narrative seeing some blood on the sleeve of his companion's shirt, he said, "Baptiste, you are surely wounded?"

"Yes," replied the other; "one of the redskins gave me a smartish stroke with a knife in that skrimmage—however, I forgive him, as I paid him for it."

"But would it not be better to attend to your wound first, and to your weapons afterwards?"

"Why, no, Monsieur Perrot, that isn't our fashion in the woods; I like first to make the doctor ready for service, and then it will be time enough to put a little cold water and a bandage to the cut."

The good-humoured Frenchman insisted upon his proposal, but had some difficulty in persuading the rough Guide to let him dress the wound, which, though deep and painful, was not dangerous.

On the following day War-Eagle returned with his triumphant party, and with the rescued horses, towards the Delaware village, every bosom, save one, beating high with exultation. Reginald could scarcely control his impatience to relate to Prairie-bird the events of the successful expedition. The young warriors anticipated with joy the beaming smiles with which they would be welcomed by the Lenape maidens; while those of maturer age looked forward to the well-merited applause of their chiefs, and the fierce excitement of the war-dance with which their victory would be celebrated. Baptiste had satiated his long-cherished vengeance on the tribe which had destroyed his parents, and Monsieur Perrot prepared many jokes and gibes, which he proposed to inflict upon Mike Smith, and those who had not partaken in the glory which he and his party had gained.

War-Eagle alone shared not in the general joy! Whether it was that he could not prevent his thoughts from reverting to Prairie-bird, or that he was oppressed by a vague and mysterious presentiment of calamity, his demeanour was grave, even to sadness, and the trophies of victory hung neglected from the fringes of his dress.

Having taken the shortest route, they arrived, a few hours before nightfall, at a point where a broad trail led direct to the encampment; and War-Eagle, whose penetrating eye had marked his friend's impatience, and who never lost an opportunity of proving to him the warmth of his attachment, said to him,

"Netis should go forward and tell Tamenund and the chiefs that the Lenape war-party are coming, and that the Dahcotah scalps are many. It will be a pleasant tale for the ancient chiefs, and it is good that they hear it from the mouth of the bravest warrior."

This compliment was paid to him aloud, and in the hearing of the whole band, who signified their approbation by the usual quick and repeated exclamation.*

Reginald replied, "No one is bravest here, where War-Eagle leads, none but brave men are worthy to follow."

The next minute Nekimi was in full speed towards the village; and the Delaware band, with Baptiste and Perrot, moved leisurely forward after him.

Scarcely two hours had elapsed when a single horseman was seen riding towards them, in whom, as he drew near, they had some difficulty in recognising Reginald, for his dress was soiled, his countenance haggard and horror-stricken, while the foaming sides and wide-dilated nostril of Nekimi showed that he had been riding with frantic and furious speed. All made way for him, and he spoke to none until he drew his bridle by the side of War-Eagle, and beckoned to him and to Baptiste to come aside. For a moment he looked at the former in silence with an eye so troubled, that the Guide feared that some dreadful accident had unsettled his young master's mind; but that fear was almost immediately relieved by Reginald, who, taking his friend's hand, said to him, in a voice almost inarticulate from suppressed emotion,

"I bring you, War-Eagle, dreadful—dreadful news."

"War-Eagle knows that the sun does not always shine," was the calm reply.

"But this is darkness," said Reginald, shuddering; "black darkness, where there is neither sun nor moon, not even a star!"

"My brother," said the Indian, drawing himself proudly to his full height; "my brother speaks without thinking. The sun shines still, and the stars are bright in their place. The Great Spirit dwells always among them; a thick cloud may hide them from our eyes, but my brother knows they are shining as brightly as ever."

The young man looked with wonder and awe

* This exclamation resembles the English word 'How-how," repeated with a strong aspirate and great rapidity It seems common to all Indian nations, for the author has heard it used by many different tribes, and it is mentioned by Charlevoix as being constantly uttered by the Natchez, Illinois, and other Indian nations, then dwelling near the banks of the Mississippi.

upon the lofty countenance of this untaught philosopher of the wilderness; and he replied, "War-Eagle is right. The Great Spirit sees all, and whatever he does is good! But sometimes the cup of misfortune is so full and so bitter, that man can hardly drink it and live."

"Let Netis speak all and conceal nothing," said the chief: "what has he seen at the village?"

"*There is no village!*" said the young man in an agony of grief. "The lodges are overthrown; Tamenund, the Black Father, Olitipa, all are gone! wolves and vultures are quarrelling over the bones of unburied Lenapé!"

As Reginald concluded his tragic narrative, an attentive observer might have seen that the muscles and nerves in the powerful frame of the Indian contracted for an instant, but no change was visible on his haughty and commanding brow, as he stood before the bearer of this dreadful news a living impersonation of the stern and stoic philosophy of his race.

"War-Eagle," said Reginald, "can you explain this calamity—do you see through it—how has it happened?"

"*Mahéga*," was the brief and emphatic reply.

"Do you believe that the monster has murdered all, men, women, and children?" said Reginald, whose thoughts were fixed on Prairie-bird, but whose lips refused to pronounce her name.

"No," replied the chief; "not all, the life of Olitipa is safe, if she becomes the wife of that wolf; for the others, War-Eagle cannot tell. The Washashe love to take scalps, woman, child, or warrior, it is all one to them; it is enough. War-Eagle must speak to his people."

After a minute's interval, the chief accordingly summoned his faithful band around him, and in brief but pathetic language informed them of the disaster that had befallen their tribe. Reginald could not listen unmoved to the piercing cries and groans with which the Delawares rent the air on receiving this intelligence, although his own heart was racked with anxiety concerning the fate of his beloved Prairie-bird. While the surrounding warriors thus gave unrestrained vent to their lamentations, War-Eagle stood like some antique statue of bronze, in an attitude of haughty repose, his broad chest thrown forward and his erect front, bearing the impress of an unconquerable will, bidding defiance alike to the human weakness that might assail from within, and the storms of fate that might threaten from without. The stern and impressive silence of his grief produced, ere long, its effect upon his followers; by degress the sounds of wailing died away, and as the short twilight of that climate was rapidly merging into darkness, the chief, taking Reginald's arm, moved forward, whispering to him in a tone, the deep and gloomy meaning of which haunted his memory long afterwards,

"The spirit of Tamenund calls to War-Eagle and asks 'Where is Mahéga?'"

On the following morning War-Eagle rose an hour before daybreak, and lead his party to the spot where the lodges of their kindred had so lately stood, and where they had anticipated a reception of honour and triumph. The chief strode forward across the desolate scene, seemingly insensible to its horrors; faithful to his determination, all the energies of his nature were concentrated in the burning thirst for revenge, which expelled, for the time, every other feeling from his breast. The Delaware warriors, observant of the stern demeanour of their leader, followed him in gloomy silence; and although each shuddered as he passed the well-known spot where, only a few days before, an anxious wife had prepared his food, and merry children had prattled round his knee, not a groan nor a complaint was uttered; but every bosom throbbed under the expectation of a vengeance so terrible, that should be remembered by the Osages to the latest hour of their existence as a tribe.

War-Eagle moved directly forward to the place where the lodge of Tamenund and the tent of the Prairie-bird had been pitched. As they approached it Reginald felt his heart faint within him, and the colour fled from his cheek and lip.

Baptiste, taking his master's hand, said to him, in a tone of voice the habitual roughness of which was softened by genuine sympathy, "Master Reginald, remember where you are; the eyes of the Lenapé are upon the adopted brother of their chief; they have lost fathers, brothers, wives, and children; see how they bear their loss, let them not think Netis less brave than themselves."

"Thank you, thank you, honest Baptiste," said the unhappy young man, wringing the woodman's horny hand; "I will neither disgrace my own, nor my adopted name; but who among them can compare his loss with miné! so young, so fair, so gentle, my own affianced bride, pledged to me under the eye of heaven, and now in the hands of that fierce and merciless villain."

At this moment a cry of exultation burst from the lips of War-Eagle, as his eye fell upon the wand and slips of bark left by Wingenund. One by one the chief examined them, and deciphering their meaning with rapid and unerring sagacity, communicated to his friend that the youth was still alive and free; that Olitipa, though a prisoner, was well, and that a fine trail was open for them to follow.

"Let us start upon it this instant," cried Reginald, with the re-awakened impetuosity of his nature.

"War-Eagle must take much counsel with himself," replied the chief, gravely. "The ancient men of the Lenapé are asleep, their bones are uncovered; War-Eagle must not forget them; but," he added, while a terrible fire shot from his dark eye, "if the Great Spirit grants him life, he will bring Netis within reach of Mahéga before this young moon's horn becomes a circle."

Having thus spoken, he resumed his scrutiny of the ciphers and figures drawn upon the bark; nor did he cease it until he fully understood their purport; he then called together his band, and explained to them his further plans, which were briefly these:—

He selected ten of the youngest and most active, who were to accompany him, with Reginald, Baptiste, and Perrot, on the trail of Mahéga; the remainder of the party, under the guidance of an experienced brave, were to follow the more numerous body of the Osages, to hang on their trail, and never to leave it while

here remained a chance or a hope of an enemy's scalp. Two of the Delawares were at the same time despatched, one to seek the aid and sympathy of the Konsas and other friendly, or neutral tribes, the other to prowl about the woods in the neighbourhood, to collect any fugitives who might have escaped, and guide any party that might be formed, to aid in the meditated pursuit. He also ordered the larger party to gather the bones and relics of their kindred, and to perform the rites of sepulture, according to the custom of the tribe.

While the chief was giving these instructions to the several parties above designated, Reginald sat musing on the very grass over which the tent of his beloved had been spread; no blood had there been spilt; it had been spared the desecration of the vulture and the wolf; her spirit seemed to hover unseen over the spot; and shutting his eyes, the lover fancied he could still hear her sweet voice, attuned to the simple accompaniment of her Mexican guitar.

How long this waking dream possessed his senses he knew not, but he was awakened from it by War-Eagle, who whispered in his ear, "The trail of Mahéga waits for my brother." Ashamed of his temporary weakness, Reginald sprung to his feet, and thence upon the back of Nekimi. The chief having chosen four of the strongest and best from the recaptured horses, one for the use of Perrot, the others for such emergencies as might occur, left the remainder with the main body of the Delawares, and, accompanied by his small party thoroughly well armed and equipped, started on the trail in pursuit of the Osages.

While these events were passing near the site of the Lenapé village, Mahéga pursued his westward course with unremitting activity, for although he felt little apprehension from the broken and dispirited band of Delawares, he knew that he was entering a region which was the hunting-ground of the Pawnees, Otoes, Ioways, and other tribes, all of whom would consider him a trespasser, and would be disposed to view his present expedition in the light of a hostile incursion; for this reason, although he was amply provided with presents for such Indians as he might fall in with, from the plunder of the Delaware lodges, he marched with the greatest rapidity and caution, and never relaxed his speed until he had passed that dangerous region, and had entered upon the higher, and, comparatively, less frequented plain, lying between the waters of the Nebraska, or Platte River, and the lower ridges, known by the name of the Spurs of the Rocky Mountains.

During the whole of this tedious march the attention paid to the comfort of Olitipa by her wild and wayward captor was constant and respectful; secure, as he thought, from pursuit, he had determined to gain her confidence and affection, and thus to share in that mysterious knowledge and power which he believed her to possess, and which he well knew that force or harshness would never induce her to impart. Thus she remained continually attended by her favourite Lita; when the band halted for refreshment, the choicest morsels were set apart for her use, and the young branches of the willow or poplar were gathered to shelter her from the sun. Mahéga rarely addressed her, but when he did so it was in language calculated to dispel all apprehension of present injury or insult; and Prairie-bird, remembering the parting counsel of the Missionary, replied to the haughty chief's inquiries with courtesy and gentleness; although she could not help shuddering when she remembered his former violence, and the dreadful massacre at the Delaware village, she felt deeply grateful to Heaven for having softened the tiger's heart towards her, and for having led him, by means and motives unknown to herself, to consult her safety and her comfort.

On one occasion during the march, Mahéga availed himself of her mysterious acquirements, in a manner that reflected great credit upon his sagacity, at the same time that it increased, in a tenfold degree, the awe with which she had inspired him and his adherents. They had made their usual halt at noon, by the side of a small stream; Prairie-bird and her faithful Lita were sheltered from the burning rays of the sun by an arbour of alder-branches, which the Osages had hastily but not inconveniently constructed; Mahéga and his warriors being occupied in eating the dainty morsels of meat afforded by a young buffalo cow killed on the preceding day, when a large band of Indians appeared on the brow of a neighbouring hill, and came down at full speed towards the Osage encampment. Mahéga, without manifesting any uneasiness, desired his men to pile a few of their most valuable packages within the arbour of Olitipa, and to form themselves in a semicircle around, for its protection, their bows and rifles being ready for immediate use. Having made these dispositions, he waited the approach of the strangers, quietly cutting his buffalo beef and eating it as if secure of their friendly intentions. Having come within a hundred yards, they drew in their bridles on a signal from their leader, who seemed disposed to take a more deliberate survey of the party. From their appearance Mahéga knew that they must belong to one of the wild roving tribes who hunt between the sources of the Platte and Arkansas rivers, but the name or designation of their tribe he was at first unable to make out. Their weapons were bows and arrows, short clubs, and knives; their dress, a hunting-shirt of half-dressed skin, a centre-cloth of the same material, and mocassins on their feet, leaving the legs entirely bare; the leader had long hair, clubbed at the back of his head, and fastened with sinew-strings round a wooden pin, to which were attached several stained feathers, which danced in the wind, and heightened the picturesque effect of his costume.

A rapid glance sufficed to show him that the new comers, although apparently busied about their meal without distrust, were not only well armed, but ready for immediate service; nor did his eye fail to note the martial bearing and gigantic proportions of Mahéga, who sat like a chief expecting the approach of an inferior.

Influenced by these observations, the leader of the roving band resolved that the first intercourse at least, should be of a peaceful nature, prudently reflecting, that as his own numbers were far superior, the nearer the quarters the greater would be their advantage. Having thus

tered a few brief words to his followers, he advanced with a friendly gesture towards Mahéga, and the following dialogue took place, in the ingenious language of signs before referred to:—

Mahéga.—"What tribe are you?"

Leader.—"Ari-ca-rá.* What are you, and whither going?"

M.—"Washashe, going to the mountains."

L.—"What seek you there?"

M.—"Beaver, otter, and grisly bear-skins."

L.—"Good. What is in the green-branch-wigwam."

M.—"Great Medicine—let the Aricará beware." To this the chief added the sign usually employed for their most solemn mysteries.

While this conversation was going on, the rovers of the wilderness had gradually drawn nearer, not, however, unperceived by Mahéga, who, throwing down a strip of blanket at a distance of twenty yards from the arbour of Prairie-bird, explained by a sign sufficiently intelligible, that if the main body of them crossed that line his party would shoot.

At a signal from their leader they again halted; and Mahéga observed that from time to time they threw hasty glances over the hill whence they had come, from which he inferred that more of their tribe were in the immediate neighbourhood.

Meanwhile their leader, whose curiosity urged him to discover what Great Medicine was contained in the arbour, advanced fearlessly alone within the forbidden precincts, thus placing his own life at the mercy of the Osages.

Ordering his men to keep a strict watch on the movements of the Aricarás, and to shoot the first whom they might detect in fitting an arrow to his bowstring, Mahéga now lighted a pipe, and courteously invited their leader to smoke; between every successive whiff exhaled by the latter, he cast an inquisitive glance towards the arbour, but the packages and the leafy branches baffled his curiosity; meanwhile the preliminaries of peace having been thus amicably interchanged, the other Aricarás cast themselves from their horses, and having given them in charge to a few of the youngest of the party, the remainder sat in a semicircle, and gravely accepted the pipes handed to them by order of Mahéga.

That chief, aware of the mischievous propensities of his new friends, and equally averse to intimacy or hostility with such dangerous neighbours, had bethought himself of a scheme by which he might at once get rid of them by inspiring them with superstitious awe, and gratify himself with a sight of one of those wonders which the Missionary had referred to in his last warning respecting the Prairie-bird. It was not long before the curious Aricará again expressed his desire to know the Great Medicine contents of the arbour. To this Mahéga replied,

"A woman," adding again the sign of solemn mystery.

"A woman!" replied the leader, in his own tongue, expressing in his countenance the scorn and disappointment that he felt.

"A woman," repeated Mahéga, gravely, "but a Medicine Spirit. We travel to the mountains; she will then go to the land of spirits."

The Aricará made here a gesture of impatient incredulity, with a sign that, if he could not see some medicine-feat, he would believe that the Osage spoke lies.

Mahéga, desiring him to sit still, and his own party to be watchful, now approached the arbour, and, addressing Prairie-bird in the Delaware tongue, explained to her their present situation, and the dangerous vicinity of a mischievous, if not a hostile tribe, adding, at the same time,

"Olitipa must show some wonder to frighten these bad men."

"What is it to Olitipa," replied the maiden, coldly, "whether she is a prisoner to the Osage, or to the Western Tribe? perhaps they would let her go."

"Whither?" answered the chief. "Does Olitipa think that these prairie wolves would shelter her fair skin from the sun, or serve and protect her as Mahéga does? if she were their prisoner they would take from her everything she has, even her Medicine Book, and make her bring water, and carry burdens, and bear children to the man who should take Mahéga's scalp."

Bad as was her present plight and her future prospect, the poor girl could not help shuddering at the picture of hopeless drudgery here presented to her eyes, and she replied,

"What does the Osage Chief wish? how should his prisoner frighten these wild men?"

"The Black Father said that Olitipa could gather the beams of the sun, as our daughters collect the waters of a stream in a vessel," said the Chief, in a low tone.

Instantly catching the hint here given by her beloved instructor, and believing that nothing done in obedience to his wishes could be in itself wrong, she resolved to avail herself of this opportunity of exciting the superstitious awe of the savages, and she replied,

"It is good. Let Mahéga sit by the strange men; Olitipa will come."

Hastily winding a party-coloured kerchief in the form of a turban, around the rich tresses of her dark hair, and throwing a scarf over her shoulder, she took her small bag, or reticule, in her hand, and stepped forth from the arbour. Such an apparition of youthful bloom, grace, and beauty, extracted even from the wild leader of the Aricarás, an exclamation of astonished admiration. Having seated herself upon a finely-painted bison robe, placed for her by Lita, she waited gravely until Mahéga should have prepared the stranger chief for what was to follow.

It was now scarcely an hour after noon, and the sun shone full upon them, with bright and excessive heat; Mahéga, pointing upward, explained to the Aricará that the Woman-Spirit would bring some fire down from that distant orb. He could not give any further information being totally ignorant of the nature of the wonder to be wrought, and as anxious to witness it as the wild chief himself.

"Where will she place it?" he inquired.

"In the chief's hand," replied the maiden

* Aricara. This tribe is by descent a branch of the great Pawnee nation, to whose language their own still bears a close resemblance; they are usually known among western travellers by the name of Riccarees, and the *French call them "Les Rls;" they are a very predatory, wild, and thievish race.*

whose intelligent mind had long since, during her residence with the Delawares, become familiar with the language of signs.

The two leaders now explained to their followers, in their respective tongues, the great medicine which they were about to see; and the latter, forgetful alike of distrust and precaution, crowded with irresistible curiosity about the spot, Mahéga alone preserving his habitual self-command, and warning those nearest to him to be prepared against treachery or surprise. The only ornament worn by the Aricará leader was a collar, made of dark blue cloth, adorned with porcupine quills, and girt with the formidable claws of the grisly bear. This collar, being at once a trophy of his prowess, and a proof of its having been gained among the Rocky Mountain traders, (from whom alone the cloth could have been procured in that remote region,) was highly prized both by the owner and his followers, and was, therefore, as well as from it colour, selected by Prairie-bird as a fitting object on which to work her "medicine wonder." She desired him to take it from his neck and to place it on the grass, with his hands below it, that no fire might come near it. When he had complied with her request, she drew from her bag a burning-glass, and, carefully adjusting the focus, held it over the dark blue cloth, in which ere long a hole was burnt, and the astonished leader's hand below was scorched.

It is impossible to depict the wonder and awe of the attentive savages, they looked first at her, then at her glass, then at the sun; then they re-examined the cloth, and ascertained that it was indeed burnt through, and that the smell of fire still rested on the edge of the aperture. After this they withdrew several paces from the spot, the leader inquiring with submissive signs whether he might replace the collar? to which inquiry the maiden gravely bowing assent, retired again into the arbour. For some time a profound silence ensued, the Osages being as much awe-struck as the Aricarás; even Mahéga himself was not proof against the prevalent feeling of superstitious terror; and thus, while desiring Prairie-bird to terrify others, he had unconsciously furnished her with a mysterious and powerful check upon himself.

It was not long before the Aricarás rose to take leave,—their chief presenting Mahéga with a fine horse; and receiving in return sundry ornaments and trinkets, of no real value, but highly prized from their rarity in that wild and desolate region. As they withdrew, they cast many a furtive glance at the arbour and its mysterious tenant, seemingly glad when they found themselves at such a distance as rendered them safe from her supernatural influence. On their return to their own people, they related, with considerable exaggeration, the wonders which they had witnessed; and Prairie-bird was long afterwards spoken of in the tribe by a name equally impossible to print, or to pronounce, but which, if translated into English, would be, "The Great-Medicine-Daughter-of-the-burning-Sun!"

After this adventure, Mahéga pursued his uninterrupted way towards the spurs of the Rocky Mountains; his manner and bearing towards Prairie-bird being more deferential than ever, and the passion that he entertained for her being checked and awed by the miraculous power that she had displayed; he still nourished strong hopes of being able ultimately to gain her affection, but in the meantime resolved to turn her supernatural skill to good account, by frightening such wild roving bands as they might fall in with, and extorting from their superstitious fears valuable presents in horses and peltry.

Meanwhile, the maiden's observant eye had marked the effect upon Mahéga produced by the burning-glass, in spite of his well-dissembled indifference, and she secretly determined that the chief use that she could make of such exhibitions as were calculated to excite superstitious awe among Indians, should be to maintain the command over Mahéga, which she was conscious she now possessed.

During the whole of this long and toilsome march, the faithful and indefatigable Wingenund hovered over the trail at such a distance as never to be perceived by any of the party, and left at occasional intervals a willow-rod, or a slip of bark, so marked as to be a sure guide to an eye less keen and sagacious than that of War-Eagle. His only food was dried undressed buffalo meat; his drink, the stream where the Osages had slaked their thirst; his bed, the barren prairie; he made no fire to scare away the prowling wolves, that yelped and howled at night round his solitary couch, his only protection from their ravenous hunger being a tuft of damp grass, over which he rubbed some powder from his flask. Twice was he descried and pursued by roving bands of Indians, but on both occasions saved himself by his extraordinary fleetness of foot; and the moment that the immediate danger was over, renewed his weary and difficult task.

Cheered by his deep affection for his sister, encouraged by the approval which he knew that his exertions would meet from War-Eagle and Reginald, and, more than all, stimulated by the eager desire to distinguish himself as a Delaware chief on this his first war-path, the faithful youth hung over the long and circuitous trail of his enemies with the patience and unerring sagacity of a bloodhound—and though she saw him not, Prairie-bird felt a confident assurance that her beloved young brother would be true to his promise, and would never leave nor desert her while the pulses of life continued to beat in his affectionate heart.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ethelston visits St. Louis, where he unexpectedly meets an old acquaintance, and undertakes a longer journey than he had contemplated.

During the occurrence of the events related in the preceding chapters, the disputes and difficulties attending the distribution of peltries among the different fur companies at St. Louis had rather increased than diminished, and Ethelston had found himself compelled, however unwillingly, again to bid adieu to Lucy, and take a trip to the Mississippi for the arrangement of his guardian's affairs in that quarter; a considerable portion of the fortune that he inherited from his father was invested in the same way

culation, and he could not, without incurring the charge of culpable negligence, leave it in the hands of others at a great distance, many of whose interests might perhaps be at variance with those of Colonel Brandon and himself.

He had been only a short time in St. Louis, when one day on passing the cathedral, he met two men, whose appearance attracted his attention. The one was past the meridian of life, and the benevolent thoughtfulness of his countenance accorded well with the sober suit of black that indicated the profession to which he belonged; the other was a stout, square-built man, evidently cast in a coarser mould than his companion, but apparently conversing with him on terms of friendly familiarity. After looking steadily at this second, Ethelston felt convinced that he was not mistaken in addressing him, "Bearskin, my good friend, how come you to be in St. Louis? I thought you were busy, bear and buffalo hunting with my friend Reginald, among the Delawares of the Missouri?"

"Ha! Master Ethelston," replied the sturdy voyageur, "I am right glad to see your face here. We have been in some trouble of late, and instead of our hunting the bears, the bears has hunted us."

"I see you have been in some trouble," said Ethelston, noticing for the first time the boatman's scars and bruises; "but tell me," he added, hastily catching him by the arm, "has any evil befallen my friend, my brother Reginald?"

"No harm that I knows of," replied the other; "but I must say that things wern't what a man might call altogether pleasant, where I left him."

"What!" exclaimed Ethelston, with an indignation that he made no attempt to conceal, "you left him in danger or in difficulties, and can give no account of him? Bearskin, I would not have believed this of you, unless I had it from your own lips!"

"Master Ethelston," answered the justly offended voyageur, "a man that goes full swing down the stream of his own notions, without heeding oar or helm, is sure to run athwart a snag; here's my worthy friend here, Paul Müller, and though he is a preacher, I'll hold him as honest a man as any in the Territory; he can tell you the whole story from one end to t'other; and when he's done so, perhaps you'll be sorry for what you've said to old Bearskin."

"I am already sorry," replied Ethelston, moved by the earnest simplicity of the scarred and weather-beaten boatman. "I am already sorry that I have done you wrong, but you will make allowance for my impatience and anxiety concerning my brother's fate!" (Ethelston always spoke of Reginald as his brother, for he had a secret and undefined pleasure in so doing, as it implied his union with the sister of his friend.) Paul Müller, easily guessing from the few words that had passed that the person now addressing Bearskin was the Edward Ethelston of whom Reginald had so often spoken to him, said,

"Sir, you certainly did an injustice to Bearskin, in thinking him capable of deserting a friend in need; but the apology you have offered *is, I am sure, sufficient to* satisfy him. The *intelligence which I have to* communicate respecting Reginald Brandon and his party is in some respects exceedingly melancholy; if you will accompany me to our lodging, which is just at hand, I will explain it to you in full, meanwhile, rest satisfied with the assurance that, to the best of our belief, your friend is safe and well in health."

As soon as they had entered the house, Bearskin, forgetting the hasty words which had so much hurt his feelings, busied himself in preparing some refreshment for Ethelston, while the Missionary related to him all that had occurred since his friend joined the Delaware encampment. He did not even conceal from him the violent passion that the latter had conceived for Prairie-bird and the despair with which, on his return to the village from the Sioux expedition, he would learn the destruction of her kindred, and her own captivity among the Osages.

"Indeed, my good sir," said Ethelston, "I must freely confess that this portion of your intelligence is the only one that brings with it any comfort; the fate of Mike Smith and his companions, and the destruction of the unoffending Delawares, are disasters deeply to be lamented, but surely, the fact of the Osage chief having carried off the Indian maiden whom you call Prairie-bird, and who seems to have exercised such a strange fascination over Reginald Brandon, can scarcely be regretted: for she will be more likely to find a congenial mate among the Red-skins, and a bitter disappointment will be spared to my excellent guardian, Colonel Brandon."

"I know not, my son," answered the Missionary mildly; "the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and it does frequently happen, as you say, that events which we lament at the moment, afford afterwards just grounds for rejoicing; nevertheless, I cannot view this matter exactly as you do, for I have known the maiden from her childhood, and she is a more fitting bride for a christian gentleman, than for a heathen warrior."

"I did, indeed, hear the Colonel, and the other members of the family at Mooshanne, say, that the Delaware youth who so bravely defended the life of Reginald at the risk of his own, had spoken in the highest terms of praise respecting his sister, the Prairie-bird, as if she were a being of a superior race; but you, my good father, are above the prejudices which darken the minds of these Indians, and you must therefore know, that whatever may be her beauty and amiable qualities, she is, after all, the daughter of a Delaware chief, and as such, could not be a welcome inmate of my guardian's house."

"Nay, my son," replied the Missionary, "she is but the adopted child of the venerable Delaware who lately fell in the massacre which I have related to you; she was not of his blood nor of his race; such qualities and nurture as she possesses have been in some measure the fruit of my own care and toil. Were it not that you might mistake my language for that of boasting, I would say, that although the prairie has been her dwelling, and a Lenapé tent her home, she does not in her education fall far short of your maidens in the settlements who have had greater advantages of instruction."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a negro with refreshment, preceded by Bearskin, bearing in his hand a bottle of French brandy, of which he vaunted, not without reason, the excellent quality and flavour; but Ethelston continued to converse in an undertone with the Missionary, his countenance evincing every moment increased eagerness and interest in the subject of their discourse, which so absorbed his attention, that he never noticed the honest boatman's repeated attempts to call his attention to the refreshment which he had prepared. Even Paul Müller was unable to comprehend this sudden change in his manner, and his vehement desire to know all the most minute particulars respecting a person of whom he had spoken a few minutes before in terms of disparagement, but he attributed it to the interest which he took in his friend's selected bride, and satisfied his curiosity to the best of his ability.

When all his many and rapidly uttered questions were answered, Ethelston rose from his seat, and abruptly took his departure, saying, as he left the room, "Thanks, thanks, my good friends, you shall see me again ere long."

"Indeed, I care not much how long it may be before I see his face again," said Bearskin, sulkily. "Here have I been bothering myself to make Pompey bring up these cakes and fruits, and I have opened a bottle of Father Antin's best brandy, and he goes off without tasting with us, or so much as taking a drop to wash down the ill words which were in his mouth a while since!"

"Nay, my good friend," replied the Missionary, "be not hasty to censure Master Ethelston, for he is a true and zealous friend to Reginald Brandon, and the news from the west seems to have affected him with much anxiety and alarm."

"That's all very well for you learned folk," said the unpacified boatman, "but we don't do things after that fashion on the river-side; and for all he's the son of an old friend of the Colonel's, when he comes this way again he's like to hear something of my notion of his manners."

"What sort of character bears he at home?"

"Why, to tell the truth, his character's indifferent good; I never heard of his bein' rude or oncivil-like before."

"Well, then, Bearskin, if he comes here again, give him an opportunity for explaining his sudden departure, before you take or express any offence at conduct of which you may not rightly understand the motives—come, my good friend, clear your brow, and let us partake with gratitude of the excellent cheer that you have provided."

Thus saying, the Missionary placed himself with his companion at table, and the ill-temper of the latter was dispelled by the first glass of Father Antin's cogniac.

After this interview with Paul Müller, Ethelston pursued the business which had brought him to St. Louis with such vigour and energy, that at the close of a week's negotiation he was able to inform Colonel Brandon that by sacrificing a small portion of the disputed claim, he had adjusted the matter upon terms which he trusted his guardian would not consider disadvantageous; his letter concluded thus:

"Having now explained these transactions, and informed you in another letter of the melancholy fate of Mike Smith and some of his companions, I must announce to you my intention of setting off immediately in search of Reginald, with the best-appointed force that I can collect here, for I am seriously apprehensive for his safety, surrounded as he is by roving tribes of Indians, with some of whom he and his party are at open war, while the band of Delawares, upon whose friendship he might have relied, is almost destroyed. As it may be a work of some time and difficulty to find Reginald in a region of such boundless extent, I must entreat you not to feel uneasy on my account, should my absence be more protracted than I would wish it to be, for I shall be accompanied by Bearskin, and other experienced trappers; and I know that even Lucy would have no smile for me on my return, if I came back to Mooshanne, without making every exertion to extricate her brother from the difficulties in which these unexpected incidents have involved him."

By the same post Ethelston wrote also to inform Lucy of his resolution, and though she felt extremely vexed and anxious on account of the lengthened absence which it foretold, still she did him the justice in her heart to own that he was acting as she would have wished him to act.

Not a day passed that he did not consult with Paul Müller, and also with the most experienced agents of the fur companies, in order that he might provide the articles most requisite for his contemplated expedition, and secure the services of men thoroughly trained and accustomed to mountain and prairie life.

In this last respect he was fortunate enough to engage a man named Pierre, a half-breed from the Upper Missouri, whose life had been spent among the most remote trading-posts, where his skill as a hunter, as well as in interpreting Indian languages, was held in high estimation. Bearskin, who was almost recovered from his wound, and from his short fit of ill-humour with Ethelston, agreed to join the party, and the good Missionary resolved to brave all dangers and fatigues, in the hope of rejoining, and perhaps of being instrumental in rescuing, his beloved pupil.

With unwearied industry and exertion, Ethelston was able, in one week subsequent to the date of his letter, to leave St. Louis in search of his friend, attended by eight hardy and experienced men, all of whom, excepting the Missionary, were well armed, and furnished with excellent horses, mules, and every necessary for their long and arduous undertaking.

Guided by Bearskin, they reached, without accident or adventure, the site of the desolate Lenapé village, in the Osage country, and there fell in with one of the young Delawares detached by War-Eagle to observe what might be passing in the neighbourhood: from this youth they learnt that War-Eagle and Reginald, with a small party, had gone westward in pursuit of Mahégan, and that the larger body of the surviving Delawares were on the trail of the more numerous band of the treacherous Osages.

Ethelston wished to go on at once in search of his friend, but the youth insisted that he

should first assist his band in taking vengeance on their enemies. Promises and threats proved equally unavailing, and after the Missionary had exhausted all his eloquence in endeavouring to promote peace, he was himself compelled to assure Ethelston that his only chance of finding the trail of his friend in a spot so intersected by multitudinous paths, was to accede to the terms proposed by the Indian; he concluded in these words:

"Doubtless the conduct of these Osages was blood-thirsty and treacherous. I cannot deny that they deserve punishment, but I would fain have left them to the chastisement of a higher power. I know, however, that I cannot change the notion of retributive justice entertained by the Indians; and although I cannot prevent retaliation, my presence may soften the severities by which it is usually accompanied; at all events I will not shrink from the attempt, especially as it is the only means by which we can possibly hope to trace those in whose safety we are so deeply interested."

Ethelston could not press any further objection, and his party, under the guidance of the young Delaware, was soon in rapid motion upon the trail of the larger body of the Osages, who were, as it may be remembered, already pursued by a band of Lenapé warriors.

Towards the close of the second day's march, Ethelston and his party met the latter returning in triumph from a successful pursuit of their enemies, whom they had overtaken and surprised before they could reach the main body of the Osage village. The attack was made by night, and the Delawares had taken many scalps without the loss of a single man; but their number was not sufficient to justify their remaining in the neighbourhood of a force so much superior to their own, so they had retreated to the southward, and were now on the way to their former village, where they intended to perform more at leisure the funeral ceremonies due to their aged chief, and those who had been killed with him, and to appease their unquiet spirits by offering at their graves the trophies taken during their late expedition. A few of the most daring and adventurous entreated permission to join Ethelston's band in his search for War-Eagle, their favourite leader; nor was he by any means sorry to grant their request, justly considering the addition of ten well-armed Lenapé warriors as a most desirable reinforcement to his party.

As soon as the selection was made, they separated at once from the remaining body of Delawares, and, guided by the youth before mentioned, threw themselves upon the trail of Mahéga and his pursuers.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Osages encamp near the base of the Rocky Mountains.—An unexpected visitor arrives.

After parting with the Aricarás, Mahéga travelled westward for many days over that barren and desolate region lying between the sources of the Platte and Arkansas rivers, without *falling in* with any other Indians; his party *was guided by a grim and scarred* warrior, who had been on several hunting excursions to the Rocky Mountains, in the course of which he had been more than once engaged with the Shiennes, Crows, and other tribes, whose names have of late years become familiar to the general reader, but who were then known only to the few adventurous spirits who had pushed their way into that wild and dangerous country.

Prairie-bird, attended by her faithful Lita, and mounted on her high-mettled and sure-footed pony, was placed near the centre of the line of march, and Mahégan himself always brought up the rear, that being the post usually occupied by an Indian chief on all occasions, excepting when engaged in attack or pursuit of a foe.

The maiden seemed to have resigned herself composedly to her captive condition; and if she still harboured thoughts or projects of escape, none could detect them in the quiet observant eye with which she noted the new and interesting objects presented to her view. They had already passed the chain of hills known as the Ozark range, and leaving the Black Hills to the northward, were crossing the sandy elevated plain which lies between them and the Rocky Mountains; the sand of this district is of a reddish hue, and in many places the hollows and small ravines are incrusted with salt, which gives them, at first, the appearance of being covered with snow; large masses of rock salt are also of frequent occurrence, and give to the waters of all the smaller tributaries of the Upper Arkansas a brackish and briny taste.

One evening, a little before sunset, Prairie-bird checked her horse, to enjoy at leisure the magnificent panorama before her; and even the suspicious Mahéga forbore to interrupt her enjoyment of its beauties, contenting himself with viewing them as reflected on her own lovely countenance. To the northward was an abrupt crag of sandstone rock, towering above the plain over which the party were now travelling; its rugged outline broken into a thousand fissures and rents, probably by the might of a rushing torrent in by-gone years, frowned like the turrets and battlements of an ancient feudal castle, and the maiden's fancy (recurring to some of the tales which had found their way into her slender library) peopled its lofty towers and spacious courts below with a splendid host of chivalry, fairest and foremost among whom was the proud and martial figure of Reginald Brandon!

Brushing a teardrop from her eye, she averted it from the castellated bluff, and turned it westward, where was spread a gradually ascending plain, covered with cedars, pines, and rich masses of various forest growth; far beyond which the Great Peak, highest of the Northern Andes, reared its majestic form, the setting sun shedding a flood of golden light upon the eternal snow reposing on its crest. With admiring wonder, Prairie-bird, to whom the dread magnificence of mountain scenery was new, gazed on the mighty landscape stretched out before her; she held her breath as the rays of the sinking sun changed the golden fleecy haze around the distant peak to a rosy hue, and soon again to a deeper saffron tint: and when, at last, it disappeared behind the rocky barrier in the west, Prairie-bird covered her

eyes with her hands, as if to enjoy over again in memory a scene of such surpassing beauty.

"Yes," she exclaimed half aloud; "many of the works of man are wonderful, and the fictions of his fancy yet more marvellous, even visions such as rose before my imagination, when contemplating yon rugged, craggy height, but what are they when compared to the living wonders of creation! Almighty Creator—merciful Father! Thou hast led the steps of thy feeble and helpless child to this wild and remote mountain solitude! it is filled with Thy presence! Thou art her protector and guide—her trust is in Thee!"

Mahéga gazed with awe on the maiden as, with parted lips, and eyes upturned to the glowing western heaven, she seemed to commune with some unseen mysterious being; and the other Indians, watchful of their leader's countenance, kept at a respectful distance until her short reverie was past, when the party resumed their march towards the spot chosen for the evening encampment.

The journey over the ascending sandy plain before mentioned occupied several days, at the end of which they reached the opening of a fertile valley, sheltered on three sides by steep ridges, well covered with wood, and watered by a clear stream; far as the eye could reach, the plain to the southward was studded with vast herds of buffalos grazing in undisturbed security; the timid antelope bounded across the distant prairie; and as the travellers entered the valley the quick eye of Mahéga detected, on the velvet turf stretched beneath the northern ridge, numerous tracks of the mountain deer and of the argali, or big-horn, a species of goat, the chamois of the Rocky Mountains, found generally among the most rugged cliffs and precipices; to the scenery of which his long beard, bright eye, and enormous twisted horn give a wild and picturesque effect. Mahéga was so struck with the singular advantages offered by this valley, both as affording a sheltered camp, ample pasturage for the horses, and a plentiful supply of game, that he resolved to take up there his summer quarters, and in selecting the spot for his encampment displayed the sagacity and foresight peculiar to his character.

About a mile from the point where the valley opened upon the plain, there was, at the base of the northern ridge, a curved and secluded verdant basin of turf, the entrance to which was so narrow and so well shaded by overhanging trees that it was not visible from any distance, and could not be approached on any other side, owing to the precipitous height of the crags by which it was surrounded; on an elevated peak or promontory, immediately above the opening which led to this natural lawn, grew a number of thick massive dwarf cedars, from under the shade of which a clear sighted man could command a view of the whole valley, and give early notice to those encamped below, of the approach of danger. Having satisfied himself that by posting a watchman there he could secure himself against the unperceived attack of any foe, Mahéga left three of his most trustworthy men in charge of Olitipa, and having despatched the remainder of his party to kill buffalo, proceeded to make a careful scrutiny of the valley, in order to ascertain whether there were signs of Indians in the neighbourhood and whether, in the event of his being compelled to shift his quarters, he could find any defile through which it might be practicable to effect a retreat.

For three whole days he pursued his search with unremitting toil, during which time he ascertained that there were no visible traces of Indians being near, and that three miles higher up the valley there was a transverse opening in the northern ridge, which led to another and a larger valley, through which flowed a river of considerable magnitude. In the mean time the Osages had not been idle, and, although little pleased to perform menial services, such as are usually left to their women, they pitched the tent of Olitipa with much taste, at the foot of a huge rock, and between two lofty pines; next to it they constructed, at a distance of only a few yards, a lodge for their chief, by stretching double plies of buffalo hide over bent poles cut after their fashion; and again beyond that they raised a larger and ruder skin lodge for themselves; the guitar and the few moveables belonging to Prairie-bird were carefully piled in her tent, and, as a watch was stationed at the opening to the valley, she was free to wander as she pleased among the trees which bordered the edge of the lawn on which they were encamped.

"Surely" said the maiden, casting her eyes upward to the beetling crags above, and then letting them rest upon the green turf at her feet, "if it be God's pleasure that I should be a captive still, he has granted me, at least, the favour of a goodly prison wherein to dwell."

She observed, with gratitude, the change that had taken place in the demeanour of Mahéga towards herself; so far from being harsh or violent, he was respectful in the highest degree, and, whether the change was owing to his fears, or to more creditable motives on the part of the Osage, she followed the advice tendered by the missionary, by treating him with courteous gentleness. Whenever he addressed her it was in Delaware; and her perfect familiarity with that tongue rendered it easy for her to make such replies as the occasion might demand, sometimes ambiguous, sometimes mysterious, but always such as were not calculated to irritate or offend his pride.

Venison and buffalo meat abounded in the Osage camp, the choicest morsels being always set apart for the use of Prairie-bird; and Lita gathered for her various kinds of berries which are plentiful in that region, some of them resembling the gooseberry, the serviceberry and others of excellent flavour; there was also found an esculent root, called by the Indians "*o-ka-no-mi*," of a farinaceous quality, which the Comanche girl had often seen on her native plains, and from which, when she had beaten and pulverized it between two flat stones, she baked a kind of cake, that was by no means unpalateable.

The Osages had now been encamped nearly a week on this pleasant and sheltered spot, dividing their time between their two favourite occupations of hunting and smoking; neither had any fresh Indian trail been discovered to arouse their suspicion or their watchfulness. Before retiring to rest, it was usual for Mahéga to come before the tent of Prairie-bird, and

she, aware of the helplessness of her situation, came forth to meet him, receiving with guarded courtesy the fine compliments which he thought fit to pay her, and replying in a tone which, although not directly encouraging to his hopes, was calculated to soothe the irritation which her former treatment of him, and the recollection of his unsuccessful struggle with Reginald, had left upon his mind.

And here we may pause to observe how the strange contradictions that are found in the human character, frequently produce a line of conduct which would, at first sight, appear irreconcileable with all probability, and yet, which is in strict accordance with the secret workings of the wayward will by which it is directed. Thus Mahéga, when he first became smitten with the beauty of Prairie-bird in the Delaware camp, where she was surrounded by friends and protectors, wooed her with the rough impetuosity of his nature, and, finding his advances rejected, he resorted, as we have seen, to brutal violence, his passion being so much heightened by the obstacles which it encountered, that, in order to gratify it, he provoked that quarrel with the Delawares in which so much blood, both of his own people and of his allies, had been already shed. Now that he was triumphant, and felt secure of the person of his captive, a new and ardent desire had arisen within him, a desire to compel her to love him. In this pursuit, also, his proud and haughty spirit led him to anticipate success, and thus, for a time, the darker and more malignant feelings of his bosom slumbered undisturbed.

One evening, when he had held his customary talk with Prairie-bird, he retired to his lodge and the maiden to her tent, where she took up her long-neglected guitar, and ran her fingers carelessly through its strings. Lita sat by her side, braiding the front of a pair of moccassins with stained quills of the porcupine, and, although neither sigh nor tear betrayed her feelings, Prairie-bird, whose heart now led her intuitively to dive into that of her companion, saw that sad and busy thoughts were there; the Comanche girl, proud and reserved as she was with others, had been won by the gentleness of her mistress, to entertain for her an attachment, that was now strengthened and cemented by the trials and dangers which they had shared together; it might, indeed, be supposed that, as both were now captives of the chief of another tribe, the relation of mistress and servant had ceased, yet Lita seemed to think otherwise, and her attendance upon Prairie-bird was, if possible, more devoted than before.

"For whom are you ornamenting those moccassins, Lita?" inquired the latter, with a sad smile.

"For whom!" repeated Lita, casting up her dark eyes, and fixing them on her mistress as if she would read her soul. The tone in which the exclamation was uttered, and the look by which it was accompanied, assured Prairie-bird that her conjectures were well founded.

When the heart is full, one overflowing drop tells the contents of the golden chalice; and from the two words spoken by her companion *Olitipa gathered her meaning* as well as if she had replied, "*Is there any* other being on earth but one, for whom I can be braiding them!"

The voice of Prairie-bird trembled with a conscious fellow-feeling, as she said, "Lita,—I ask not to know your secret, but I pray to the Great Spirit so to direct the steps of him for whom those moccassins are made, that he may receive them at your hands, and wear them for your sake!"

On hearing these words a deep blush came over the face and neck of the Comanche girl; a word of kindness had touched a spring, which in her wild and wayward nature would have been unmoved by fear or by violence, and she threw herself into the arms of Prairie-bird, giving vent to long-concealed emotions, in a flood of tears.

Scarcely had she regained her composure, and resumed her braiding, when the quick ear of Prairie-bird caught the sound of a low chirrup, like that of a grasshopper, close at the back of the tent; she remembered to have heard that signal before; the blood fled from her cheek, and she held her breath in agitated silence; again the sound was repeated, and Prairie-bird stole to the corner of the tent whence it proceeded, and stooping her head, said, in English, "If Wingenund is there, let him speak."

"My sister!" whispered the soft voice of the youth in reply.

"'Tis he! 'tis my dear young brother himself!"

"Is all quiet, Prairie-bird?"

"All is quiet."

"Then Wingenund will pull out one of these tent-pegs, and creep in below the canvass,—he has much to say to his sister."

In spite of the emotion caused by her brother's sudden appearance, and by the recollection that if discovered his life would certainly be forfeited, Prairie-bird retained sufficient presence of mind to continue passing her fingers through the chords of her guitar, in order to drown the noise made by Wingenund in removing the fastenings and effecting his entrance below the tent. At length he stood before her, and after gazing sadly, fondly on his countenance for a few moments, she fell upon his neck and wept! The figure was indeed that of her favourite brother, but oh, how changed since she had last seen him! Cold, wet, sleepless nights, fatigue and hunger, had all combined to wear and exhaust a frame which, although cast in Nature's fairest and most graceful mould, had not yet reached the enduring strength of manhood; his once gay attire was soiled and ragged, the moccassins on his feet were of undressed bison-hide, torn, and scarcely affording any protection against the stones and thorny plants with which that region abounds; his light bow, with a few arrows still hung at his back, and the hunting-knife at his girdle; this was all that remained of the gay accoutrements with which he had been adorned in the Osage village; yet, although the frame was emaciated, and the cheeks sunken, the proud lustre of his eye told of a spirit unquenched by suffering, and rising superior to the trials which had almost destroyed its earthly tenement. Prairie-bird longed to ask an hundred questions in a breath; how he had come! whether he had seen or learnt anything of War-Eagle and of Reginald! but affectionate

compassion for her young brother's sad condition overcoming every other feeling, she said to him, "Dear, dear Wingenund, you are wearied to death, sit by me and rest; you are starved, are you not?"

"Wingenund has not eaten for two days," replied the youth, seating himself gently at his sister's side.

Fortunately, more than half of the evening meal, apportioned to Prairie-bird and Lita, remained untouched in the tent, and the latter instantly set before the youth some well-cooked cakes and bison-meat, luxuries such as had not passed his lips for many a day; and having also placed a vessel of water within his reach, she went, with the intuitive delicacy and sagacity of her sex, towards the opening of the tent, so as to afford Prairie-bird an opportunity of speaking unrestrainedly to her brother, and at the same time to secure them as far as possible against interruption. Wingenund, with all his heroic patience and self-denial, was a young half-starved Indian, and the delicacies set before him vanished in a few minutes, as if they had been placed before a famished wolf. Prairie-bird offered him a draught of water, adding, with an affectionate smile, "My brother, 'tis well that there is no more meat, a full meal is dangerous after so long a fast!"

"It is enough," replied the youth; "Wingenund is well now."

"Tell me, then, how you have followed to this distant region, and whether you have seen anything of War-Eagle, and of—his friends?"

"Wingenund has seen none," he replied; "nothing, except the trail of Mahéga, and that he would have followed to the big salt lake, or to death."

"But how has it been possible for you to pursue the trail undiscovered, to find food, and to avoid strange Indians on the path?"

"Wingenund kept far behind the Washashe; their eyes could not reach him; he has left on every day's trail marks that War-Eagle will know; they will speak to him as plainly as my sister's medicine book tells her the Great Spirit's will. He will come soon and his friends with him."

"But my brother has not told me how he procured food on this toilsome journey?"

"When the Lenape's heart is full, he thinks little of food," replied the youth proudly. He added, in a more subdued tone: "It was not easy to find meat, for the Washashe had driven the bison from their path, and Wingenund could not leave their trail. Twice he has met bad Indians, who tried to kill him."

"And how did he escape them, being without a horse?" inquired Prairie-bird.

"They were too many for him to fight, and he ran from them, but being weak with hunger, one Aricará overtook him by the waters of the Arkansas. Wingenund shot him, and plunging into the river, dived; and the others never found him; but Wingenund lost his rifle; and since then he has eaten only roots and fruit."

The simple narrative of the hardships and sufferings which her young brother had undergone for her sake, and which his emaciated appearance attested but too well, brought fresh tears to the eyes of Prairie-bird, but she checked them as well as she was able. and said, "Tell me yet one more thing; how have you been able to reach this spot unperceived by the Osage watchmen?"

"Wingenund saw from far the camp chosen by Mahéga; he saw that he could not approach it in front; but the rocks behind are rough and high; he made a rope of bark and grass, climbed up the height, and let himself down from a pine-tree above the tent; but in case he should be discovered and killed by the Osages, he has left an arrow where War-Eagle is sure to find it, and the arrow will show him where to come."

"Dear, dear Wingenund, you are indeed a brother," said the maiden, deeply moved by the mingled foresight, patience, and devotion that he had evinced. "You are, indeed, a worthy son of the ancient people."

Here she was interruped by a shrill cry; Lita was at the same instant thrown rudely aside by Mahéga, who rushed into the tent, followed by two of his warriors. Wingenund sprang to his feet, but ere he could draw the knife from his girdle he was seized by the Osages, and his arms pinioned behind his back.

Dark and lowering was the frown which the angry chief cast upon his prisoner. The Delaware youth quailed not before it; the hour of trial had arrived, and the haughty spirit rising within him, triumphed over all that he had undergone; all that he knew he had yet to undergo. He drew himself to the full height of his graceful figure; and fixing his bright keen eye full upon Mahéga, awaited his fate in silence.

"Has the cunning antelope of the Delawares run so far to see the den of the Black Wolf?" demanded the chief, with a contemptuous sneer. "Has the buffalo bull sent the calf on a path that he was afraid to tread himself? Have the Lenape girls sent one of their number to carry wood and water for the Washashe warriors?"

Mahéga paused; and on finding that his cowardly and brutal jeers called forth no reply, nor changed a muscle on the haughty countenance before him, his anger grew more ungovernable, and he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "If the cur-dog will not bark, the whip, and the knife, and the fire shall find him a tongue! If he wishes not to be torn in pieces on the spot, let him say what brought him to the Osage camp, and where he has left War-Eagle, and his pale-faced friends!" Neither to the threats nor the inquiries of Mahéga, did Wingenund deign to make any reply, and the enraged chief struck him across the face with a heavy bull-hide whip suspended from his wrist;* the blow was given with such force that it laid open the youth's cheek, and a stream of blood poured from the cut. At the sight of this unmanly outrage, the self-control of Prairie-bird almost gave way, but a look from her brother recalled her to herself, and checked the impulse which would have led to the utterance of entreaty mingled with indignant reproach.

"Speak not, my sister," said the hero boy in the Delaware tongue; "speak not to the cowardly Washashe wolf! Waste not your breath on one who has only courage to strike when his enemy's hands are tied!"

* The Indians in the Missouri constantly carry a short whip of bull, or cow-hide, suspended from their wrist, with which, when in pursuit of buffalo, or any other game, they lash their horses most unmercifully

Mahéga fixed his eyes upon the maiden, and a sudden thought lighted up his countenance with a gleam of malignant triumph. Approaching close to her, he said in a stern low whisper, "To-morrow, before the sun goes down, Olitipa becomes the bride of Mahéga, or that boy is burned at a slow fire with such tortures as the Lenapé never thought of in dreams!" So saying, he ordered the prisoner to be carefully guarded and left the tent.

CHAPTER XXXI.

War-Eagle's Party follow the Trail.—A Skirmish, and its Results.—The Chief undertakes a perilous Journey alone, and his Companions find sufficient Occupation during his Absence.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pains that Wingenund had taken to leave on the trail such occasional indications as might assist War-Eagle in following it, the progress made by the latter was much slower than might have been expected by any one who knew the fierce desire of vengeance that burned within him. Several times did the impatience of Reginald Brandon vent itself in words, which he addressed in an undertone to Baptiste.

"I fear that my Delaware brother has lost some of his energies, in this great calamity which has befallen his tribe; when he followed the Dahcotah trail his foot was light and swift, now, when more than life and death may hang upon the events of an hour, his march is heavy and slow as that of a jaded ox."

"Master Reginald," replied the Guide; "you do the War-Eagle wrong. A trail on this hard barren region is not like one in the prairies of Illinois, or Missouri, where, in every little bottom, there are patches of long grass on which it is marked as plain as a high road. We have passed to-day several trails of strange Indians, probably Aricaras or Upsarokas;* had the War-Eagle made a mistake and followed one of these, we might have wandered several days before we recovered our right route; watch his eye, it is bent on the ground, not a blade of grass escapes it; he has not time for a word, even with you."

"I believe you are right, Baptiste; yet I have now studied my Delaware brother's countenance and character for some time. I have seen him under the influence of strong, ay of deadly passion, and I truly wondered at his self-control, but there seems now to be a dull, heavy load upon his spirit, as if it were overwhelmed."

"Look at your feet this moment," quoth the Guide; "and tell me if, on this hard spot, you can trace the trail on which we are moving."

"In truth I could not," said Reginald, looking down; "I grant our friend's sagacity in following it, but what has that to do with the state of his mind and temper, which we were discussing?"

"More, perhaps, than you think, Master Reginald. Along this very path the steps of Mahega and his warriors have passed, the hoofs of the horse bearing Olitipa have trod it; it is now broad daylight, yet you can see nothing; do you wonder, then, that you cannot discern the trail of the thoughts and purpose that travel, in the dark, over the heart of the Delaware?"

"Baptiste," said Reginald, smiling, "I knew that you were a skilful hunter, and an experienced woodsman, but I never before knew that you were a philosopher!"

"Nor I either, Master Reginald; but perhaps I may not be one after all. What is a philosopher?"

This blunt question, from the sturdy Guide, seemed somewhat puzzling to his young master, and the former continued, laughing, "Well, I suppose it's some curious kind o' crittur or other that we never heard of in the woods, and you don't seem to have met it often yourself, or you'd not find it so hard to give a description of it!"

"You are right, Baptiste, it is a creature not very often met with, either in the woods or in civilized life, but as I have likened you to it, I am in duty bound to describe it to you as well as I can. A philosopher is a man whose desires are moderate, and his passions under due control; who can trace human actions to their real motives, and effects to their true causes; who can read the character of others without prejudice, and study his own without self-partiality; who can bear prosperity without pride, and adversity without repining;—such is my idea of a philosopher, the sketch is rough, but sufficient to give you some notion of the object in view."

The Guide was silent for a few moments; he took off his hairy cap and twirled it several times round in his bony hands, as was his frequent custom when perplexed. At length he replied, "Well, Master Reginald, if that be what you call a philosopher, I'm sure War-Eagle is more like one than I am, and perhaps, you'll not take offence if I say that he is more like one than you are yourself; it comes natural to an Ingian to read his neighbour's heart and hide what passes in his own. And, as to governing his passions, I think you have seen enough to convince you that, although they were as hot and wild as was the horse which you bestride, they are now as obedient to the bridle as Nekimi."

"I grant it," said Reginald, reining in the proud steed alluded to in the Guide's illustration; "I grant it, and see how earnestly our Delaware friend is now bent upon his task; he has made a signal for the party to halt, and is stooping to examine a blade of grass as if life itself depended upon his acute sagacity."

It was, indeed, as the young man said; the Delaware chief had stooped to examine a bunch of grass by the side of the trail, in which his quick glance had detected a small object which would have escaped a less practised eye; with a subdued exclamation of surprise he seized it, and concealed it for a moment in his hand, a ray of animation lighting up his fine countenance; it was but for a moment, his features almost immediately relapsed into their usual melancholy, grave expression; and drawing near to Reginald, he put into his hands a small golden clasp, saying,

"My brother, War-Eagle knows it well, it was given by the Black Father to Olitipa; the trail is clear as the great white pathway of heaven."*

Reginald took the clasp, and seizing the hand which held it, he pressed it in silence to his heart; he had marked the varying expression on War-Eagle's countenance, he saw how a mo

* Upsaroka, the Indian name of the tribe usually designated, in Rocky Mountain Travels, as the "Crows," a fierce, roving nation, who were then, as they still are, at deadly enmity with their neighbours the Blackfeet, and agree with *them only in the propensity to* plunder or kill white men, *whenever opportunity offers*

* By this name the milky way is known among some of the Indian tribes.

ment's recollection had changed the sanguine exultation of the lover, to the sad, yet steady firmness of the friend; and his heart yearned towards his Indian brother with an affection that words could not express; but they were not needed; his moistened eye and glowing cheek spoke volumes to his friend, and War-Eagle bounded forward again upon the trail, his spirit excited by an incident which, though slight in itself, had called forth high and generous emotions.

A few minutes after the Delaware had resumed his post as guide, our hero purposely fell into the rear of the party, and throwing the rein loosely over the neck of his horse, turned the precious golden relic over and over between his fingers, and pressed it a thousand times to his lips; the ground over which they were travelling was a broken series of ravines or ridges, and thus he was enabled to indulge in the extravagant endearments which he bestowed upon the senseless trinket, without being exposed to the curious eyes of his fellow-travellers, now out of his sight.

He was aroused from his reverie by a terrific yell, accompanied by a sharp sensation of pain, and on raising his eyes perceived at once that he was cut off from his party by a mounted band of Indians, one of whom had shot an arrow through the fleshy part of his thigh, into the flap of the saddle, where it was still sticking. Instantly deciding that it was better to trust to the speed of Nekimi, than to the desperate chance of forcing his way through the Indians in front, he struck the steed with his heel, and turning his head towards the open prairie to the left of the trail, went off at full speed, followed by several mounted warriors; his first care was to secure the clasp within his hunting-shirt; his next to examine the priming of his rifle, and of the pistols at his saddle-bow; finding these all in order, he looked round at his pursuers, who, although urging their horses by yells and blows, did not gain upon Nekimi even when going at an easy gallop.

Reassured by finding the advantage which he had over his enemies in the speed of his horse, Reginald cut the arrow where it pinned his leg to the saddle, and then without much pain or difficulty drew the shaft from the flesh. Being now satisfied that he had nothing to fear from the wound, he turned the head of his horse in a direction parallel to the trail on which his party had been marching, as he felt that his ultimate safety must depend upon his not being separated from them.

A loud yell, followed by a succession of rifle-shots, announced to him that the attack on his friends had commenced; and although the broken nature of the ground still prevented him from seeing them, he could gather from the sound that they were at no great distance; rightly judging that they must be anxious respecting his own safety, he now applied his bugle to his lips, and blew a clear blast, which Baptiste immediately recognised as the concerted signal for "All's well," and cheerily responded to.

The Indians in pursuit of Reginald reined in their horses, and stood gazing at each other in astonishment, at sounds which had never before reached their ear, and all, excepting one, wheeled to rejoin the main body of their band; he who remained was evidently a chief, or principal brave, his dress was splendidly adorned with scalp-locks, eagle-feathers, and beads; and instead of the raven crown and single tuft of hair usually worn by the Pawnees and other Indians of the Platte and Missouri regions, his long black hair streamed over his shoulders, and fell upon the haunches of the wild spirited courser on which he was mounted. When he found that the number of his enemies was reduced to a single one, Reginald was not of a temper to consider flight as any longer necessary, so he checked the speed of Nekimi, and trotting to the summit of a rising-ground in front of him, saw, at a little distance in the ravine below, the skirmish that was still continued between his friends and the attacking party.

But he was not long permitted to remain an idle spectator, for the Indian, having recovered from the surprise occasioned by the bugle-call, was again approaching him at full speed; Reginald turned his horse towards his assailant, and deliberately raising his rifle, waited until the latter should be near enough to afford him a certain aim; but the Indian observing his cool, determined bearing, and having some experience of the dangerous nature of the white man's weapon, suddenly wheeled his horse, and galloped to and fro in a zigzag direction, sometimes advancing, sometimes retreating, with a rapidity that left Reginald in doubt whether he were meditating an attack, or desirous only of exhibiting his wonderful powers of horsemanship.

These doubts were, however, soon resolved; for in one of these swift evolutions, when passing the spot where Reginald stood, at a distance of fifty yards, the Indian suddenly threw himself half off his horse, and hanging over its side, discharged from under the animal's neck an arrow, which whizzed close by Reginald's ear; then, when he was himself out of shot, resumed his seat in the saddle, and again wheeling his horse, prepared to repeat a manœuvre which had so nearly been attended with success.

On this second occasion Reginald was resolved to try his chance with the rifle, and when his enemy, emboldened by the quiet, and apparently surprised demeanour of the white man, threw himself again over the side of his horse, and came within a nearer range, our hero levelled his rifle at the animal, whose body shielded completely that of his opponent, and the ball taking effect behind the shoulder, both horse and man rolled upon the grass.

Reginald sprung from his saddle and hastened to the spot, hoping to secure the Indian while still encumbered by the fallen horse, but the active savage leaped upon his feet, and not having time to fit an arrow to the string, struck a furious, but unsuccessful blow at the young man's head with his bow, then uttering his war-cry, rushed upon him with a long sharp knife that he had drawn from his belt; but the Indian had mistaken both the skill and strength of the opponent with whom he thus rashly endeavoured to close, and in a moment Reginald's cutlass was buried in his chest. In vain he summoned all his remaining strength to strike a last blow, both hand and eye refused their aid, and he fell heavily forward upon the grass; Reginald, sheathing his cutlass, knelt by the side of the wounded man, and strove to staunch the blood; but his efforts were fruitless, the lungs were pierced, and it was evident that death was fast approaching.

The Indian, still conscious of what was passing around, and momentarily expecting the scalp-knife upon his forehead, the usual fate of the conquered among those of his race, gazed in surprise upon the countenance of the young man, who was now tending him with compas-

ionate anxiety; they could not interchange a word; the Indian feebly raised his hand to his head with an inquiring look, and then pointed to the knife; Reginald shook his head, as if to intimate that he need be under no apprehension of that indignity, and then continued his earnest, but ineffectual endeavours to staunch the flowing blood, while the sufferer's head rested upon his shoulder.

During this time not a groan escaped from the lips of the savage warrior; but feeling his end at hand, he gathered his dying energies, and taking from his neck the magnificent collar which he wore, made from the claws of a grizzly bear, bound together with skins of snow-white ermine, he gave it to Reginald, making him a sign that he should wear it, then supporting himself in a sitting posture by the end of his bow, which he had caught up from the ground, and with his eye steadily fixed upon the snow-clad peak now visible in the western horizon, the prairie-warrior breathed his last.

As soon as Reginald was assured that life was extinct, he stretched the unconscious limbs, closed the eyes, gathered the massive hair over the rigid countenance, and arranged the arms and accoutrements decently beside the fallen chieftain, knowing well that it would not be long before the body was borne off by those of his own tribe. There was neither exultation nor triumph on the young man's countenance, as he looked from the lifeless form of his late adversary to that of the steed, which lay dead beside him, on which, not many minutes before, he was careering over his native plains in the pride and vigour of manhood; he felt that the strength, the activity, the courage of the savage warrior, were equal to his own; that it had depended upon a single successful thrust whether of the two should be now taking his last uncoffined sleep in the wilderness. Sad thoughts of his waiting mother and sister, musings on the fate of Prairie-bird stole upon his heart, and he continued gazing almost unconsciously on the body of the Indian, until he was aroused by a shrill blast from the bugle of Baptiste; the signal-blast was "Beware;" and casting his eyes around, he saw that the band of Indians who had been skirmishing with War-Eagle's party, were advancing at full speed to the spot where he stood. His spirit rekindled by this fresh excitement, he caught up his rifle, and vaulting on the back of Nekimi, gave him the rein. The pursuers soon found that their chance of overtaking him was hopeless, and while they gathered round the body of their fallen chief, Reginald rejoined his party, who received him with a shout of triumph that reached the ears of the mourners on the far prairie.

As Reginald dismounted and walked gravely through the group to salute War-Eagle, every eye was fixed upon the bear-claw collar around his neck, and he received the silent homage which Indian warriors pay to successful valour.

There was also a quiet dignified modesty in the young man's bearing and demeanour, which did not escape their observant and approving eyes. "My brother is welcome," said War-Eagle, extending his hand to greet his friend; "he has killed a great chief; when the warriors tell their deeds at the war-dance, the tongue of Netis will not be silent."

"The red-man of the prairie was brave," replied Reginald; "he died like a warrior. I trust *his spirit is gone to the happy land.*"

"Master Reginald," said the guide, thrusting his large bony hand into that of our hero, "it did my heart good to see the Ingian fall; he sprang upon you like a tiger, and I feared he might catch you unawares."

"No, Baptiste, no; he was a gallant fellow and I am truly sorry that, in self-defence, I was obliged to kill him, but the advantages were all on my side. Nekimi was far swifter than his horse, and his knife was no match for my cut lass. Do you know to what tribe he and his party belonged?"

"Capote-bleu, Master Reginald, this is the first time you have seen *Les Corbeaux*—Upsaroka they call themselves; they are a wild race." And he added, in a lower tone, "We shall see more of them before we go much farther."

"In the skirmish which they had with you, were any wounded on either side?"

"Not many, for the rascals galloped about in such an unaccountable flurry, it wasn't easy to make sure work with the rifle; but the doctor scored the ribs of one, and I think War-Eagle struck another; they kept at a very unfamiliar distance, and their arrows were as harmless as snow-flakes."

"How fared it with Monsieur Perrot?" inquired Reginald, who saw the light-hearted valet grinning with satisfaction at his master's victory and safe return; "did he not try his skill upon any of these marauding Crows?"

"Well, I hardly know," said the guide "Master Perrot is like the bear in the tree, he fights very well when he can't help it; but I conceive he's not over-fond of the redskins ever since that Dahcotah handled his wig so roughly What say you, Monsieur Perrot?"

"Monsieur Baptiste is not altogether wrong, replied the good-humoured valet; "if one of those red Corbeaux come very near to peck me I do my best to pluck his feathers out; but I much rather see a fat partridge or capon than one of them!"

The conversation between the Frenchman and the guide was interrupted by War-Eagle, who made a sign to the latter, as well as to Reginald, that he wished to speak with them apart.

"Brother," said the Chief, addressing our hero, "the Upsarokas are many; their warriors are like the bison-herds; they will soon return to our path, we must be ready for them. What is my brother's counsel?"

"Baptiste," said the young man, "you have more experience in these matters than I have; speak first."

The Guide did not reply immediately; he bent his eyes upon the ground, and his fingers rested on the head of the massive hatchet from whence he derived his Indian name. When he spoke it was with slow but decisive enunciation. "War-Eagle has spoken truly, the Crows will return in greater numbers; they will seek revenge for the death of their chief; they are brave, but their arms are bad—we are few, but our weapons can do service. My counsel is, that we choose a strong camp and await their coming; we will then handle them so that they shall not desire to interrupt us again, or perhaps they may offer to make a treaty upon our own terms."

"The words of Grande-Hâche are wise," rejoined the Chief; "he does not waste his breath in blowing against the wind. What says my brother Netis?"

"He says," replied Reginald, with his char

acteristic impetuosity, "that the counsel of Grande-Hâche may be good for our own safety, but it will not bring us nearer to Mahéga. Netis would follow the Osage trail in spite of all the Crows between the Platte and the Mountains."

"My brother speaks like a warrior without fear," said the Chief in reply; "yet we cannot follow the trail of the Washashe while fighting by day and by night with the Upsaroka. War-Eagle will join the counsel of Grande-Hâche to that of Netis. Let us choose a strong camp, bring in plenty of meat, and prepare to receive the Upsaroka. I will steal away alone in the night. I will follow the trail of Mahéga, and return to tell my brother what I have seen. It is enough, I have spoken."

Both the Guide and Reginald approved the Chief's decision; and although our hero would rather have accompanied him on the trail, he felt that he would impede the progress of his Indian brother, whose fleetness of foot was so much greater than his own; he therefore acquiesced with cheerfulness, and they set forward to select a camp that should unite the advantages of a defensible position to those of a plentiful supply of water.

For several hours War-Eagle pursued the Osage trail without halting, but his keen eye roved occasionally from side to side in search of a spot favourable for encampment, while Reginald and Baptiste brought up the rear of the party; the former mounted on Nekimi, prepared to gallop forward to the front and give the alarm, in case of the reappearance of the marauding Crows. About an hour before sunset they reached a valley watered by a small stream, the taste of which proved refreshing, and free from the salt with which that region abounds; near the centre of the valley was a thick copse of alder and willow, covering a space of fifty or sixty yards square. On forcing his way through the outer bushes, War-Eagle found an open plot of fine level turf, entirely surrounded by the copse which sheltered it from view on all sides.

The Delaware, having brought his party into this natural encampment, and picqueted the horses within the space above-mentioned, made a careful examination of the thicket, in which he was accompanied by Reginald and Baptiste; they then selected the points from which they could best command the approaches from different quarters; at these they piled logs and branches matted with grass and turf, from behind which secure, though slight breast-work, they could take deliberate aim at any hostile party approaching from the prairie. Before dusk their preparations were complete; the watch was set, and the remainder, after a frugal supper, forgot the fatigues of the day in sleep.

The night passed without the occurrence of any alarm; and an hour before daylight, War-Eagle arose and prepared himself for his perilous expedition, after the ancient fashion of his tribe; a fashion which the Delawares, in common with most of the semi-civilized Indians, have in these modern days neglected, if not forgotten.

Having smeared himself from head to foot with an ointment made from the fat and marrow of deer, he painted his face and chest with stripes of a dark colour, purposely making the form and device to resemble those of the Missourian nations. He wore upon his legs a light pair of deerskin leggins, without ornament, supported at the waist by his belt; from the latter was suspended on one side his tomahawk, on the other his knife; he also stuck into it a brace of loaded pistols given to him by Reginald, and within the folds secured some bullets and charges of powder, as well as a few slices of dried buffalo-meat; his throat, chest, and arms were naked, with the exception of a small light blanket, which, when thrown across his shoulder, did not in the least impede the free exercise either of his hands or feet. As speed was now his chief object, he left both his rifle and his heavy war-club in the charge of Reginald, who looked on with mingled feelings of admiration and envy, while his friend was preparing for his solitary journey. Knowing that War-Eagle, if successful in his undertaking, would see the Prairie-bird, he longed to send by him a thousand messages of love, yet he remembered and respected the feelings of his friend, and, controlling his own, embraced him in silence.

As War-Eagle was about to depart, Reginald was surprised at seeing him attach to his belt a small bunch of feathers, carefully tied together, and he imagined that they might be in some measure connected with his Indian brother's totem, or heraldic designation, but the latter resolved his doubts by saying to him and to Baptiste,

"War-Eagle will follow the trail of Washashe as swiftly as his feet can run; whenever it is difficult to find, or divides in a fork, he will stick one of these small feathers in the grass; let 'Attō' follow first on the trail; he has been often on the war-path, and his eyes are good; Grande-Hâche with his long rifle should come next—let my brother go last with Nekimi, and let him always have eyes in his back; the Upsarokas are cunning, and the wives of a dead chief are lamenting. If War-Eagle lives, he will return quick and meet his brothers on the trail; if he is killed, he will meet them afterwards in the fields where his fathers hunt. Farewell." So saying, the Delaware chief pointed impressively to the distant ridge of the mountains, and left the encampment.

After the departure of War-Eagle, Reginald busied himself, with the aid of Baptiste, in making further preparations against the expected attack. On inquiring of the latter, he learned, with much satisfaction, that Attō or A-tō (*Anglicè*, "The Deer,") who had been designated by the chief as leader on the trail in his absence, was a tried and experienced warrior. His appearance, indeed, was not much in his favour, for he was small and spare in stature, and his features, though not positively ugly, were stern, and rarely lighted up by expression; his eye was piercing rather than brilliant, and he scarcely ever spoke, excepting in reply to a question. His swiftness of foot, which was almost equal to that of War-Eagle himself, had procured for him the appellation by which he was known in the tribe. It should however, in justice to him, be mentioned, that he seldom ran *from* an enemy, for his courage was proverbial, and in a former expedition against the Dahcotans, he had made several escapes so extraordinary, that his comrades had given him a name consisting of sixteen or seventeen syllables, which we will not inflict upon civilized eyes or ears, but which signifies, "The-man-who-cannot-be-killed-by-an-arrow."

Reginald finding that Attō was familiar with the English tongue, and desirous to be on good terms with his new officer, addressed him as the

"Does Attō think that the Upsaroka will come to-day?"

"They will come."

"Will they attack us in this position?"

"Perhaps; the Upsarokas are fools—they do not know the Lenapé."

"Are you satisfied with the arrangements we have made for the defence?"

"Yes; but you should let the horses feed outside, with a guard, or they will soon eat up the grass within; it will be time enough to drive them in when the Upsaroka come."

"You are right," said Reginald, frankly, and he ordered it to be done immediately.

Savages are extremely like ourselves in all that concerns the internal workings of self-respect; and if Reginald already stood high in Attō's opinion for his courage and bodily advantages, the Indian was disposed to think more highly of him when he found, even in a matter so trifling, that the young man listened to and followed his counsel.

The forenoon passed without any tidings of the Crows, and Reginald, impatient of a state of inaction, resolved to sally forth upon Nekimi, and to make a sweep over the adjacent undulating prairie, to see whether he could discover any signs of them.

Armed with his knife, pistols, and cutlass, he slung his spy-glass over his shoulder, and vaulted on the back of his favourite, charging Baptiste and Attō, now left in joint command of the garrison, to keep a sharp look-out, and promising to return before dusk.

How did his blood dance with excitement as he found himself trotting briskly across the virgin turf of that wild, boundless, vegetable ocean; beneath him a steed bold, eager, joyous as himself; above him a blue immensity of unclouded sky; and around him breezes fresh from the snowy chambers of the Northern Andes! Nor were the sources of excitement from within wanting to complete its measure,—a consciousness of youth, and health, and strength; a mind capable of appreciating the wonders of Nature, and of following them up to their Almighty Framer; a heart filled to overflowing with the image of a kindred being whose love he doubted not, and whom, in spite of dangers and obstacles, his ardent and sanguine spirit whispered that he would soon rejoin!

Again and again did he draw from his bosom the precious clasp, which assured him that he was following her footsteps, and then replacing it, he would stoop over the neck of Nekimi, and caressing his playful ear, and gently pressing his flank, the noble creature caracoled, neighed, and bounded beneath him, like the "wild and wanton herd" described in one of the most exquisite scenes depicted by our immortal dramatist.*

Notwithstanding the excited flow of his spirits, Reginald did not forget the object of his excursion; he not only noted carefully the various remarkable features of the surrounding country, so as to secure, in case of need, his retreat to the encampment, but he scanned the side of every hill, and the bosom of every valley that he passed, to see whether any parties of the Upsaroka were yet within view.

He had ridden many miles without seeing anything alive, except a few straggling buffalos and antelopes, and was on the point of returning towards the camp, when he descried some moving body on the sky-line in the eastern horizon; throwing himself from his horse, he adjusted his telescope, and fixing it on the object, ascertained at once that it was a large party of Indians on horseback. Although his glass was of excellent quality, they were so distant that he could not count them, but he was satisfied that they considerably exceeded a hundred. Observing that their course was directed westward, he was able, by descending an oblique ravine, to reach the edge of a copse which they were likely to pass at no great distance, whence, himself unseen, he might watch their movements, and form a more accurate estimate of their force.

He had not been long stationed at the post which he had selected for this purpose, when the band came full in view on the ridge of a neighbouring hill.

That it was a war-party of the Crows he could no longer doubt, as their dress and appearance were precisely the same, and they were following with the faultless sagacity of a pack of bloodhounds, the trail which he and his companions had trodden on the preceding day.

Being completely sheltered from their view by the copse, he was able to observe their movements, and to plan his own accordingly; he counted upwards of two hundred and fifty mounted warriors, and his impression was that their numbers amounted in all to nearly three hundred; they moved forward upon the trail at an even pace until they reached the brow of the hill, whence they could perceive, although at a considerable distance, the thicket in which the Delawares were encamped. Pausing here, they held a brief council; it was clear that they suspected that the above-named wood contained those of whom they were in pursuit, nor was it long before their lynx eyes detected a slight column of smoke curling up above the trees, on seeing which they shouted aloud, while their rapid and vehement gesticulations sufficiently explained to Reginald the discovery that they had made.

It was evidently not the present intention of the Crows to make an open attack, for they now divided their force into two bands, each of which pursued its course along the back of the ridges which crowned the valley wherein the encampment lay, and thus they would be enabled to reach a point not far distant from their enemy on opposite sides, before their approach could be perceived.

The position of Reginald himself was now critical, for in his eagerness to watch the motions of the Indians, he had allowed them to get between him and his own party; it only remained for him, therefore, to decide whether he should endeavour to reach the camp unperceived, or trusting to the speed of Nekimi, ride boldly towards it; he chose the latter, rightly judging the impossibility of escaping Indian eyes in so open a country, and he thought it also probable that if they meditated a night attack upon the encampment, they would permit him to enter it without showing themselves.

Having therefore examined the priming of his pistols, and loosened his cutlass in the sheath, he pushed his way through the thicket, and emerging on the opposite side, rode deliberately forward.

Choosing the most open ground, he pursued his homeward way down the valley, and though his eye glanced occasionally to the hills on each side, not an Indian was to be seen, and in less than an hour he found himself again within the precincts of the wooded camp.

* *Merchant of Venice*, Act v

The gravity of his demeanour as he joined his companions, led them to conjecture that he had seen some trace of their enemies, which impression was confirmed amongst them when he led Baptiste and Attō aside to hold with them a council of war.

Having briefly detailed what he had seen, he expressed his belief that the Crows had divided their force for the purpose of attacking the camp in the course of the ensuing night, and concluded by asking their opinion as to the most advisable means of defence. After a short deliberation, it was agreed that four men should watch at the opposite sides of the thicket, each of whom being well sheltered behind a log of wood already rolled to its edge, could detect the approach of an enemy from the prairie, and that each should be provided with two loaded rifles, so that in case of his being obliged to fire one to give the alarm, he might still have another ready for immediate use.

These preparations having been made, and the horses brought within the encampment, the little party sat down to their supper, and afterwards smoked their pipes as unconcernedly as if neither Crows nor danger were lurking in the neighbourhood. Night came on, and those whose turn it was to sleep, announced by their heavy breathing that the hour of rest was not unwelcome; Monsieur Perrot snored so loudly from beneath the pile of blankets in which he had enveloped himself, that he more than once received a slight admonition from the elbow of the half-awakened Guide, who lay beside him. Reginald, however, was in a mood which would have no fellowship with sleep, his thoughts were of Prairie-bird, still in Mahéga's power, of his Indian brother, now far on his solitary and dangerous journey, of the lurking foes whose attack he hourly expected, and of the familiar faces at Mooshanne, whom distance and absence now rendered doubly dear. The night was dark, for the young moon, after traversing her appointed section of the southern sky, had disappeared, and the twinkling stars threw but an uncertain light, rendered yet more doubtful by the leafy branches which waved gently to and fro under the light breath of the night breeze.

In order to give some employment to his unquiet spirit, Reginald resolved to visit the several stations where his sentries were posted, and throwing his rifle over his shoulder, arose and commenced his rounds. Moving with a slow and noiseless step, he went to each of the posts in succession, and finding all the watchmen on the alert, whispered to each a word of approbation. The last station that he visited was occupied by Attō, and Reginald, sitting down behind the log, conversed with him for a short time, in a low tone of voice, each pausing at intervals to listen and look out upon the valley. On a sudden, Attō, touching his arm, pointed to a spot near the summit of the neighbouring hill; and following the direction indicated, Reginald could plainly see a small light, as of a dry stick, which burned for a few seconds and was then extinguished.

"Let Netis watch," whispered the Indian; 'Attō will return directly;" and with these words he disappeared in the thicket.

Not many minutes elapsed ere he came back, and in the same subdued tone, said, "All is well now, the Upsaroka are coming, A'tō saw the same light on the other hill; it is a sign for both parties to attack from opposite sides at once."

"All is well, indeed," thought Reginald, within himself "This fellow must have a strange stomach for fighting, when he applies such a term to an expected conflict, where the odds are to be two or three hundred to ten."

These were Reginald's thoughts, for a moment; but his words were: "Baptiste, Perrot, and I, will remain at this post, you can spare us also one of your warriors; you will guard the opposite post with three others; there will remain one to move constantly round within the edge of the thicket, to summon us to any point where the Crows may threaten an attack. Is the plan good, what says my brother?"

"It is good," replied the Indian, and they set about it forthwith in earnest and in silence.

Reginald and Baptiste, having previously examined all the logs which were now to serve for their defence, lost no time in selecting their respective stations; the Indian warrior allotted to them was placed between them; Monsieur Perrot, safely ensconced behind the fallen trunk of an alder, was to load his master's rifle, and when discharged, to replace it by another; and the defenders of the camp were all instructed not to fire until their enemies were so near as to afford a certain aim.

The side on which Reginald was stationed was the most open to attack, from its being adjacent to the brook that flowed through the centre of the valley, the banks of which, being dotted here and there with alder-bushes, afforded an occasional covert to an approaching enemy. Nearly an hour had elapsed, and Reginald began to suspect that they had mistaken the intentions of the Upsaroka, when Baptiste pointed in silence towards the prairie, and on following with his eye the direction of his companion's finger, he saw a dusky object in motion. Looking steadily forward, each with his finger on the trigger of his rifle, Reginald and Baptiste could now distinguish the figures of several Indians, creeping along the ground towards the thicket. On a sudden the report of Attō's rifle in the opposite quarter was heard, and the creeping figures starting up, advanced with shouts and yells, vainly hoping that the spot, which they had selected for attack, was defenceless. When they were within a few paces, Reginald and Baptiste fired at once, and the two leading Indians fell; most of their companions retired in dismay, one only sprung forward with desperate courage, and his evil destiny bringing him close past the log, behind which the Guide was posted, the latter cleft the skull of the unfortunate savage with his tremendous hatchet.

Maddened by disappointment, and by the loss of several of their comrades, the Crows let fly a shower of arrows, at the edge of the thicket, and retreated on all sides, filling the air with their cries and yells. Reginald, having crossed over to visit Attō at his post, found that the Delaware had not fired in vain, for a reeking scalp already hung at his belt, and it appeared that the enemy had retired on this side also, as soon as they found themselves exposed to the murderous fire of unseen marksmen.

Not long after this unsuccessful attack on the part of the Upsarokas, day broke, and having mounted their horses, which had been left at some distance, they returned towards the encampment; and galloping to and fro, endeavoured, by every kind of insulting gesticulation, to induce their cautious enemies to come forth, or at least to exhaust their ammunition by firing

at random; but Reginald's party kept close within their covert, taking no notice whatever of these bravadoes, although several of the horsemen came within a distance which would have rendered them an easy mark for the Guide's unerring rifle; their insolence produced only a grim smile on his weather-beaten countenance, as he whispered to Reginald,

"They are somewhat out of their reckoning as to the 'Doctor's' range; poor devils, if they'll only keep off, I don't want to hurt any more of them! But if that long-haired fellow, capering on a brown horse, were a Dahcotah, I'd make a hole in his hunting-shirt before he was many minutes older."

"I am glad to find you in a merciful humour, Baptiste," replied the young man; "I too would willingly avoid farther slaughter of these Crows, and while fighting with them we are losing time more precious to me than gold."

As he was yet speaking, his attention was caught by the sound of a scuffle within the thicket, followed by a shout, and immediately afterwards Attō and another Delaware came forward, dragging with them a Crow, whom the quick eye of the former had detected lurking under the dense foliage of an alder-bush.

"Whom have you here?" exclaimed Reginald; "and where did you find him?"

"Upsaroka," replied Attō; "he must have crept like a snake under the grass, for the Delawares are not blind, yet he is here."

The prisoner was a tall, bold-looking youth, and he seemed resolutely prepared to meet the fate which a spy and an enemy must expect in that wild region.

"'Tis a fine lad," said Baptiste, dryly, "and he has given us a lesson to keep a better look out; 'tis clear that he has crept down the brook, while we have been watching those galloping thieves: tie the rogue's hands, my friend Attō, and let us scour the thicket from one end to the other. Two or three such as him within the camp, in the middle of the night, would be apt to interfere with our rest."

The prisoner having been bound, Attō proceeded with two of his warriors to search every corner of the thicket, while Baptiste, with the remainder, watched the various parties of horsemen who were still hovering at a distance.

Reginald was left for a few minutes alone with the youth, whom he looked at with mingled compassion and admiration, for it was clear that he had devoted his own life to obtain a triumph for his tribe, and although he had not the expressive intellectual beauty of Wingenund, nor the heroic stamp of form and feature by which War-Eagle was distinguished, yet there was a certain wild fierceness in his eye betokening a spirit, that awakened a feeling of sympathy in Reginald's breast. While looking steadfastly on the youth under the influence of these feelings, he observed that the Delawares, in their hurried anxiety to secure the prisoner, had bound the thongs so tightly round his arms as to cause a stoppage of the blood, the veins around the ligature being already swollen to a painful extent.

With the unhesitating generosity of his nature, Reginald stepped forward, and loosening the thong, left the youth at liberty; at the same time he smiled, and pointing to the knife in his belt, made the sign of "No," intimating that he should not repay this benefit by using that weapon.

The quick-sighted savage understood him as plainly as if the hint had been given in his own language, for he instantly detached the knife from his belt and presented it to Reginald. There was so much natural dignity and sincerity in his manner while doing so, that our hero in receiving his weapon, gave him in exchange a spare knife that hung in his own belt, making at the same time the Indian sign for friendship.

The nerves which were strung to endure expected torture and a lingering death, were not prepared for this unlooked-for clemency; the youth spoke a few soft words in his own tongue, looking earnestly in Reginald's face, and had not yet recovered his self-possession, when Attō returned with his companions, to report that the prisoner must have come upon this dangerous war-path alone, as no other of his tribe was lurking in or near the thicket.

"Attō," said Reginald, addressing the Delaware, "this youth belongs by right to the hand that took him, he is yours; I ask you to give him to me, to do with him as I like."

"The hand and the heart of Attō are both open to Netis; he is brother to the war-chief of the Lenapé—Attō is glad to give him what he asks."

"Attō is a brave man," replied Reginald, "and worthy of his race; he can see that this youth is on his first war-path; he came to the camp to make himself a name; if the quick eye of Attō had not found him, there would have been a war-cry in the night—is it not so, brothers?"

The Delawares gave their usual exclamation of assent.

"Brothers," continued Reginald, "Attō has given this youth to me—I thank him: the hand of Netis is not shut, it holds a collar which hung upon the neck of a great warrior, it will not be ashamed to hang on the neck of Attō."

As he said this, he threw over the neck of the Delaware the magnificent bear-claw collar which adorned his own. This was perhaps the happiest moment of Attō's life, for such a collar could be worn only by braves of the highest rank in Indian Aristocracy, and the acclamation with which his comrades hailed the presentation of the gift, assured Reginald that it had been neither unwisely nor unworthily bestowed.

The latter then turned towards the prisoner, and made him a sign to follow towards the outer edge of the thicket, in the direction where Baptiste and he had shot the two Indians who led the attack; their bodies still lay where they fell; the youth gazed upon them with stern composure. Reginald inquired by a sign if he knew them; he replied in the affirmative; and he added, pointing to the nearest of the two, a sign which Reginald did not comprehend; he turned to Attō for an explanation.

"He says," replied the Delaware, "that was his father."

Reginald, much affected, placed the youth's hand against his own breast, in token of regard, and made him understand that he was free to go himself, and to remove the bodies without interruption.

The young Crow replied by a look of gratitude too expressive to require the interpretation of language, and moving towards the body of his father, bore it into the midst of his wondering companions, who received him with repeated wailings and cries; none, however, seemed disposed to believe in his assurance that they might

take away the other body likewise; he was obliged to return himself, and then one of his tribe, seeing that he stood uninjured beside it, came out from their ranks and assisted him to bear it off.

CHAPTER XXXII

An unexpected Meeting.—Reginald prepares to follow the Trail.

For two days the band of Crows hovered round the encampment, sometimes showing themselves on the adjacent heights, at others drawing off to a distance, in hopes of enticing some of Reginald's party to venture into the open country; but, although he himself chafed and fretted like an impatient steed, he was sensible of the risk that must attend any error or imprudence while in the neighbourhood of an enemy so crafty and so strong in numbers, and he never permitted the watchfulness of his little garrison to be relaxed for a moment; the horses were driven to feed under the guard of two armed Delawares, and were not sent to a distance whence their return could be intercepted, and the watches were regularly set and relieved during the whole night.

On the third day the Crows, finding that all their endeavours to draw their cautious enemy from the covert were vain, held a council of war, after which three or four of their principal chiefs approached the encampment, making, as they advanced, signs of amity and truce. Reginald went out to meet them, accompanied by Baptiste and Attō, leaving orders with the remainder of his party to hold themselves in readiness against any attempt at treachery. Halting at a spot not more than eighty yards from the wood, he awaited the Crow leaders, who came forward to meet him without any apparent suspicion or treacherous design.

They had taken the precaution to bring with them the youth to whom Reginald had already shown kindness, and whose presence they rightly conjectured would facilitate the amicable nature of their mission.

Reginald acknowledged with a smile the friendly greeting of his young protégé, and then, drawing himself up to his full height, awaited in silence the opening of the parley.

The Crow *partisan** first glanced his keen eye over the persons of those whom he was about to address, as if scanning them for the purpose of ascertaining their qualities and character, and whether he should best succeed by endeavouring to circumvent or to overawe them. Keen as he was, his penetration was here at fault, for although no three persons could be more dissimilar than those before him, yet, whether taken collectively or severally they looked like men who would not be easily overreached; his eye first rested on the spare, sinewy frame and impenetrable countenance of Attō, thence it glanced to the muscular frame and shrewd hard features of the Guide, and turning from them, it found but little encouragement in the bright bold eye and commanding form of Reginald Brandon.

Perceiving, with the intuitive sagacity of an Indian, that the latter was the leader of his party, the partisan opened the parley by pointing his fore-finger at Reginald, and then pressing the closed fingers against his own breast; he then pointed to himself with the same finger, and afterwards stretching both arms horizontally, moved them up and down with a vibrating motion, concluding his pantomime by again raising the fore-finger of his right hand vertically to the height of his forehead. Reginald, who could not understand these gestures, turned to Attō, saying, "Does my brother know what the stranger speaks? If so, let him explain."

"He says," replied the Delaware, "that he wishes to be friends with you; and he tells you, by the last signs, that he is an Upsaroka and a chief."*

"Tell him," said Reginald, "that if his heart is true, and his tongue not forked, we also wish to be friends with him and his people."

The Crow replied by making the conventional sign for "Good," adding to it that for "Truth."

On this being explained to Reginald, the latter desired Baptiste to bring from the camp some tobacco, a pipe, and a few trinkets for distribution among the Crows. On the return of the Guide, the whole party took their seats, Reginald placing the partisan on his right, and the young prisoner whom he had released on his left. After the pipe had been smoked with due gravity and decorum, he divided among his guests some beads and other fanciful ornaments, according to their rank, with which they seemed highly delighted; the chief in particular testified his satisfaction by repeated gesticulations of friendship and affection towards his white brother, whom he invited to go and feast with him and his braves. This invitation Reginald begged leave to decline, but he desired Attō to explain to his guest that he would visit him on some other occasion.

While these civilities were passing between the respective parties, a great commotion was observed among the Crows stationed on the neighbouring hill, some of whom were seen galloping to and fro, as if communicating some unexpected intelligence. The partisan arose and took his leave with courteous dignity, explaining by signs that he wished to ascertain what was passing among his people.

As he withdrew, the youth, whose life Reginald had spared, turned his head and gave the latter a look which he understood to convey a warning, but it was so rapid that he could not feel assured that he had rightly construed its meaning. Reginald remained for some time on the spot watching the motions of the Crows, who had now gathered in their scattered horsemen, and were evidently awaiting with some impatience the return of their chief. Reginald's eye was still fixed upon them, when Attō, pointing to the eastward, whispered, "Men are coming!"

Turning his head in the direction indicated, Reginald thought he perceived a moving object in the distance.

"I see something in that quarter, but not distinctly; are you sure it is a party of men?"

"Sure."

"Mounted, or on foot?"

* In the travels of Major Long, and others, who have described the Indians of the far-western prairies, the "brave" who leads a war-party is usually designated a "partisan."

* It has before been mentioned, that among the roving tribes of the great Missourian wilderness every one has its distinctive national sign; these are well known to each other, and to white men who are experienced in the life of the far-west; the sign mentioned in the text is that adopted by the Upsarokas, as they intend by the motion of their extended arms to imitate that of the wings of a crow in flight. The Sioux, Blackfeet, Pawnees, Snakes, Aricaras, Comanches, &c., have all their distinctive national signs; but an enumeration of them would be tedious and out of place here

"Both," replied the Delaware, without removing his bright keen eye from the object. "They are upon our trail," he added; "if they are not friends, we had better return to the camp."

Meanwhile Reginald unslung his telescope, and having at length brought it to bear upon the advancing party, he exclaimed,

"By Heaven! there are white men as well as Indians there, horses, and loaded mules!"

"How many?" inquired Baptiste.

"They seem to me to be fifteen or twenty strong. Should their intentions appear suspicious, we are near enough to retire into our camp: if they are friends, they will soon see us, and approach without fear or hesitation."

The Guide shook his head as if distrusting all new comers in that remote region; but they were within rifle-shot of the covert, and could, if necessary, retire thither under the protection of the fire of those within it.

The Crows still hovered upon the summit of the adjoining hill, and several minutes of breathless interest elapsed ere the approaching band emerged from a hollow upon a point of the valley, where they were now clearly distinguishable, and proved to be, as Reginald had said, a mixed party of Indians and white men.

He was not aware that among the latter was a telescope as good, and a horseman whose eye was more practised in the use of it than his own; that horseman galloped out in front of his band and advanced at full speed to the spot where Reginald stood, and almost before the latter could rightly use his faculties of sight or speech, that horseman flung himself from his horse, and Reginald was in the arms of Ethelston.

There is nothing that stirs the heart to its very depths, more than the meeting a friend after a long separation; not such a friend as is found in the ordinary intercourse of worldly society, but a friend whom we really esteem and love, a friend whom we have learned to cherish in our bosom's core—this must have been felt by all (alas! they are not very many), who have deserved and obtained such a blessing in life. How, then, must these stirrings of the heart be increased if such a friend comes to our aid and comfort when we thought him thousands of miles distant, when we are in anxiety and peril, when he brings us the latest tidings of our home! We will not attempt to describe the meeting of the two long-separated and loving friends under such circumstances, nor to relate one hundredth part of the inquiries which each had to make and to reply to.

The reader is already in possession of the information which they had to communicate to each other, and can easily understand how Ethelston and his party, guided by the young Delaware, had followed the trail on which they had been preceded by the bands of Mahéga and of Reginald: the latter greeted with cordial pleasure Paul Müller, who now advanced to offer him his friendly salutation, while Pierre, Baptiste, and Bearskin, who had weathered many a stormy day by flood and field together, interchanged the grasp of their horny hands with undisguised satisfaction.

In the meeting between the two bands of the Delawares, there was less demonstration, but it may be doubted whether there was less excitement, as the last comers narrated to their comrades the bloody vengeance which they had taken on some of their foes, and dilated upon that which they anticipated in pursuit of Mahéga.

Ethelston's party being provided with some coffee, sugar, biscuits, and other luxuries, which had been long strange to Reginald's camp, the evening of their arrival was devoted to a great merry-making, Monsieur Perrot undertaking the office of chief cook, and master of the ceremonies, both of which he executed with so much skill and good-humour as to win the favour of all present. In the midst of the feasting, the security of the encampment was never endangered by the omission of due precautions, for the horses were driven in and the sentries posted, as on the preceding night, Reginald being well aware of the treacherous character of his Crow neighbours, and his suspicions aroused by the slight, but significant look given to him at parting by the youth whose life he had spared.

While they were seated round a blazing fire enjoying the good cheer which Perrot had provided, Pierre, fixing his eyes upon the bear-claw collar worn by Attō, uttered an exclamation of surprise, and, springing from his seat, went to examine it closer; having done so, he pronounced slowly and with emphasis a name as long as a Sanscrit patronymic.

"What does that mean, Pierre?" inquired Ethelston, who had found in the latter a guide of great shrewdness and experience.

"It is the name of the Upsaroka to whom that collar belonged, in our tongue, 'The man whose path is red.' I saw it upon his neck last year, when I was at the post near the Upper Forks. He came to trade with us for a few knives and blankets—he was a great war-chief, and had killed more Black-feet than any man in his tribe."

"Well, Pierre, his own turn is come now; he will kill no more Black-feet nor white men either," said Baptiste to his comrade.

"Did yonder Lenapé kill him, and in fair fight, man to man?"

"He was killed in fair fight, man to man; not by Attō, but by a young war-chief whom the Lenapé call Netis," replied the Guide.

Pierre fixed his quick grey eye upon the athletic figure of Reginald Brandon, who coloured slightly as he encountered at the same time the glance of Paul Müller.

"It is true," he said, "I had foolishly separated myself from the rest of my party, I was intercepted in attempting to return, and only escaped paying the penalty of my carelessness by the speed of my horse. The Crow chief was better mounted than the rest of his tribe, and as soon as I paused to breathe my horse, he attacked and slightly wounded me; in defending myself, I killed him."

"My son," observed the Missionary, "he died as he had lived, reckless and brave; it rejoices me to hear you speak of the deed as one of necessity and self-preservation."

"I know not," muttered Pierre, "what he calls necessity, but it's a fine feather in the youth's cap, and our Delawares shall know it too."

One of the most remarkable features in the character of this man, was the facility with which he acquired the habits and languages of the different tribes, among whom his roving life had thrown him; moreover, he had the faculty of remembering with unerring certainty, any face, or spot, or tree, or path that he had once seen, so that his services as guide and interpreter were highly valued; and as Pierre, though a good-humoured fellow, was shrewd enough in matters of business, he usually exacted, and had no difficulty in obtaining a liberal remuneration from

the rival leaders of the fur-trade companies; he was tolerably well versed in the language of the Crows and the Black-feet, the two great nations inhabiting the vast region between the upper waters of the rivers Platte and Missouri; and there were few of the roving tribes upon either bank of the latter, among whom he could not make himself understood. As an interpreter, he dealt fairly by his employer, although he hated the Black-feet, in consequence of a warrior of that tribe having carried off an Indian *belle* to whom Pierre was paying his addresses. This offence he had never forgiven, and it gave him in all subsequent transactions a natural leaning towards the Crows, the mortal and hereditary foes of his successful rival's tribe.

While Pierre related in an under tone, to those Delawares of his party who did not understand English, the victory obtained over the great war-chief of the Crows, by Reginald Brandon, the latter kept up a long and interesting conversation with Ethelston, whom he found already informed by the Missionary of his engagement to Prairie-bird.

On this subject Reginald, who knew the prudence of his friend's usual character, scarcely expected his sympathy or concurrence: he was, therefore, the more agreeably surprised, when he found him disposed to enter into all his plans for the recovery of his betrothed, with a zeal and enthusiasm almost equal to his own.

"The good Missionary," said Ethelston, "has told me much of the early life, as well as of the character and qualities of Prairie-bird. I cannot tell you how deeply she has engaged my interest, my own feelings towards your sister render me capable of appreciating yours, and I pledge you my faith, dear Reginald, that I will spare neither toil nor exertion, nor life itself, to aid you in this precious search."

Reginald grasped his hand—there was no need of words of gratitude between them—and ere long both turned to consult with Paul Müller, as to their further proceedings. After due deliberation, they agreed that on the following morning they should pursue the trail, regardless of their Crow neighbours, whom they had now little cause to fear, and that previous to starting they would hold a council, at which Reginald should propose the distribution of their respective posts, on the line of march, in the event of their wishing him to retain that of leader.

The night having passed without any alarm, Reginald summoned a general council of war before daybreak; as soon as they were assembled, he told them through Baptiste, who acted as interpreter, that they were now strong enough to pursue the trail, without fear of interruption from the Crows, and that if the latter were foolish enough to make an attack, they would soon have cause to repent it. He then added that War-Eagle, their chief, being absent on the war-path, it was necessary for some one to act as leader until his return, and, as his party had been joined by so many warriors of experience, he would gladly place himself under the advice and guidance of the man whom they might select.

When Baptiste had finished this speech, the oldest warrior of Ethelston's party arose and said, "Is it not true that War-Eagle, when he went, appointed Netis leader in his place?" A murmur of assent came from the lips of Attō and his party. "Is it not true," continued the Indian, "that Netis is a brave and skilful warrior?—one who need not be silent when the braves strike the war-post? His heart is true to the Lenapé, and he will tell them no lies."

"If the white men are content with Netis, the Lenapé wish no other leader. I have spoken."

As the scarred and weather-beaten warrior resumed his seat, another and a general murmur of approbation broke from the Delawares; and Ethelston having spoken a few words of similar import to the white men, Reginald found himself by universal acclamation chosen leader of the party.

After modestly thanking them for their good opinion, his first act was to appoint Attō as guide upon the trail, desiring him to select any two whom he might wish to assist him, in the event of its becoming forked, or otherwise difficult to follow. Monsieur Perrot, with the provisions, and loaded mules, occupied the centre of the line of march, in which comparatively secure post he was accompanied by Paul Müller, the main body of the hunters and the Delawares being distributed before and behind the baggage.

For himself Reginald reserved the rear-guard, where he retained Ethelston, Baptiste, and a young Delaware, whom he might despatch upon any emergency to communicate with the front. He also appointed four of the best mounted of his men, two on each side of his party, to protect the flanks against any sudden attack, Pierre being sent forward to render any assistance to Attō that he might require.

These arrangements being complete, and made known to the respective parties, they were about to set forth on their journey when Attō informed Reginald, that the Crow youth was coming swiftly across the valley towards the encampment, pursued at a distance by several horsemen of his tribe; the lad was riding one of the swiftest and most untamed of the wild horses with which that region abounds, yet he had neither bridle nor saddle, guiding the animal with a leather thong, which he had thrown round its nose, and urging it to its utmost speed with a bow which he held in his right hand. A few minutes brought the foaming little steed and its rider to the edge of the thicket, where the latter, still holding the leather thong, stood in silence before Reginald; his eyes were literally sparkling with indignant rage, and he did not even deign to look behind him to see whether his pursuers approached; the latter, however, did not choose to venture near the encampment, but as soon as they saw that he had gained its shelter, they gave a few loud and discordant yells, and disappeared behind the hill.

The services of Pierre were now put into requisition; and as soon as the youth found an ear that could understand his tale, he told it with a rapidity and vehemence, that showed the strong excitement of his feelings; the story, as interpreted by Pierre, was briefly thus:

"The youth was present on the preceding day at a war-council, where the Crows proposed a plan for inveigling the white men to a feast, and then attacking them unawares, at the same time desiring him to use the favour that he had found in their eyes, as an additional means for entrapping them; this he positively refused to do, and boldly told the assembled chiefs, that their counsels were wicked and treacherous, and that he would in no wise aid or abet them." Indignant at this remonstrance from a stripling, the partisan had ordered him to be whipped as

verely with thongs, and to be tied hand and foot; the sentence was executed with the utmost cruelty, but he had contrived early in the morning to slip off his bands, and springing to his feet, he seized the fleetest horse belonging to the partisan, and leaping on its back, galloped off to warn his protector against the meditated treachery.

The truth of the tale required no confirmation, for the glow of resentment burned too fiercely in his eye to be dissembled, and the light covering of antelope skin which he had thrown across his shoulders, was saturated with his blood. Reginald's first natural impulse was to punish the perpetrators of this outrage, but he checked it when he remembered the magnitude of the stake that bound him to the trail: "Tell him, Pierre," said he, "that I thank him for his single tongue, and I love him for his honest brave heart. Ask him if there is anything that I can do for him."

"Nothing," replied the youth to this question; "tell him that I have warned him against the forked tongues of my tribe, because he gave me my life, and was good to me, but I must not forget that his hand is red with my father's blood. The day is very cloudy; the Great Spirit has given a hard task to the son of the fallen chief; his back is marked like the back of a slave; he has lived long enough."

The voice of the youth faltered as he pronounced the last words; the thong dropped from his feeble grasp, and as he fell to the ground, the wild horse broke away and galloped across the valley. "He is dying," said Reginald, bending over him; "see, here below his hunting shirt is the broken shaft of an arrow, which one of his pursuers has shot with too true an aim." While he spoke the young Crow breathed his last.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Shewing how Wingenund fared in the Osage Camp, and the Issue of the Dilemma in which Prairie-bird was placed by Mahéga.

We trust that the compassionate reader is now desirous to learn something more of the fate of Prairie-bird and her unfortunate brother Wingenund, whom we left a prisoner in the hands of the merciless chief of the Osages. For a long time after the latter left her tent, his parting threat rung in her ears, that she must on the morrow give her consent to be his bride, or by her refusal consign Wingenund to a cruel and lingering death. Her busy imagination portrayed in vivid colours the scene of torture, and the heroic fortitude with which she knew he would endure it, and as she turned from that picture, the figure of Reginald Brandon rose to her view, as if upbraiding her with the violation of her plighted troth; torn by these contending struggles, the poor girl sobbed convulsively, and the tears forced their way through the fingers with which she in vain endeavoured, either to suppress or conceal them. Lita threw her arms round her mistress's neck, and strove by her affectionate, yet simple endearments, to soothe her grief; for a long time they proved unsuccessful. but when at last she whispered,

"The Great Spirit is very good; he is stronger than Mahéga, let Prairie-bird speak with him as she often did when the Black Father was with her."

"True, Lita," she replied, looking gratefully at the Comanche girl through her tears; "you remind me of what I ought not to have forgotten."

The next moment saw her prostrate upon her couch—the book of comfort in her hand, and her earnest prayers ascending toward Heaven.

She rose from her devotions with a calmed and strenthened spirit; the first result of which was a desire to converse with Wingenund, and to decide with him upon the morrow's fearful alternative.

Mahéga willingly consented to the interview, justly believing that it would rather forward than retard his plan for compelling her consent, compared with which the boy's life weighed not a feather in the balance, so he ordered him to be conveyed to her tent; and the guards who conducted him having informed her that if she unbound his hands, he would be instantly seized and removed, they retired to the aperture, awaiting the termination of the meeting with their habitual listless indifference.

Prairie-bird cared not whether they listened, as she spoke to her young brother in English, of which she knew that they understood little or nothing.

"Dear Wingenund," she said, "you heard the threat uttered by that savage, after he struck you?"

"I did."

"Is there no device or means by which we can contrive your escape; we may trust the Comanche girl?"

"I do not see any," replied the boy, calmly, "the eyes of the Osage chief are open, the hands of his warriors are many and ready. It does not matter; War-Eagle and Netis will be here soon, then all will go well."

"All well!" said Prairie-bird, shuddering. "Know you not that to-morrow I must consent to be the wife of the Osage, or be the cause and the witness of my brother's horrible death?"

Wingenund looked at her with unfeigned surprise.

"The daughter of Tamenund—the Prairie-bird sent by the Great Spirit, from an unknown land, to dwell among the lodges of the Lenapé—she who has learned all the wise words of the Black Father—she to become the wife of that wandering wolf! Can my sister's heart beat towards him?"

"Heaven knows how I loathe and dread him! worse than the most poisonous snake in the prairie."

"I thought so," he replied. "And how ought a wife to feel towards the man whom she marries?"

"To feel that he is the joy, the food, the treasure of her heart; the object of her secret thoughts by day, of her dreams by night; that when she prays to Heaven his name is on her lips; that she loves him as—as—"

"As Prairie-bird loves Netis," said Wingenund, smiling. The conscious girl blushed at the impassioned eagerness into which her feelings had betrayed her, but she did not attempt to deny her brother's conclusion, and he continued, more gravely, "Then my sister could not be the wife of the Osage without leading a life of misery and falsehood. No, no," he added, his bright eye kindling as he spoke; "let to-morrow come; Wingenund is ready; he will show that wolf how the Lenapé die. Let to-morrow come, and Mahéga shall learn that

Wingenund despises his hate as much as Prairie-bird scorns his love. My sister, I have spoken it. The deeds of my fathers are before my eyes; the blood of the ancient people is in my veins; words cannot change my mind. Farewell! and when you see War-Eagle and Netis, tell them that the Washashe fire drew neither complaint nor cry from the lips of Wingenund."

As he spoke, his agonized sister looked up in his face, and read but too plainly the high, unconquerable determination legibly stamped upon his proud, expressive features. She saw that the instinctive feelings of his race had triumphed over all the gentler impressions which she and the Missionary had endeavoured to implant; and, knowing that now she might as well attempt to bend a stubborn oak as to effect any change in his resolution, she embraced him in silence, and suffered the Osage guards to lead him from the tent.

Composing herself by a strong effort of self-command, Prairie-bird revolved in her mind various schemes for saving the life of her devoted brother; one after another she considered and rejected, until at length the idea occurred to her that perhaps she might contrive to work upon the superstitious fears of Mahéga. With this view she examined carefully all her slender stock of instruments and curiosities—the novelty of the burning-glass was past, the ticking of the watch given to her by Paul Müller, though it might surprise the Osage, could not be expected to alarm, or induce him to abandon his determination. Then she cast her despairing eyes upon the few volumes which formed her travelling library; among these her attention was accidentally directed to the almanac which the good Father had brought to her from the settlements, when he gave her the watch, and she sighed when she thought how often she had amused herself in the spring, comparing them together, calculating the lapse of time, and the changes of season which they severally announced. Her observation of the sabbaths had been most punctual, nor had it been interrupted by the toils and privations of the journey, so she had no difficulty in finding the week or the day then passing. "July," she exclaimed, reading to herself half aloud, "only two weeks of this sad month are yet past; methinks they seem more like fourteen months than fourteen days! See here, too, on the opposite leaf, prophecies regarding wind and weather. How often would the dear Father point these out to me, and strive to explain the wonderful terms in which they describe the movements of the stars; he was very patient, but they were too hard for me; I am sure he tried to make me understand these strange words, 'Aphelion,' 'Apogee,' 'Perigee,' but, if he ever succeeded, I have forgotten it all. What is this notice in larger letters? To-morrow, to-morrow, it stands written, 'Total eclipse of the sun, visible at Philadelphia 9h. 42m.'—surely, surely it will be visible here too. I will trust to it, I will build my faith upon it, and Wingenund's life shall yet be saved." So saying, she clasped her hands together, and her lovely countenance beamed with re-awakened hope.

Lita, who had been watching her mistress with affectionate solicitude, and listening with childish wonder to her half-uttered soliloquy, was overcome with surprise at this sudden change in her demeanour; she thought that Prairie-bird had been conversing with some unseen being, under which impression she approached, and asked, timidly,

"Has Olitipa seen a Good Spirit, and have her ears drunk words of comfort?"

"Olitipa has received words of comfort," replied her mistress, kindly; "they seem to her words from Heaven; she trusts that she may not be deceived; she will address her evening prayer to the Great Merciful Spirit above, and retire to rest, at least to such rest as it may be His will to give her."

For many hours after Prairie-bird had been stretched upon her furry couch did her thoughts dwell upon the solar eclipse, now the foundation of her hopes; she remembered how the Missionary had explained to her that it was visible at one hour in one part of the earth, at a different hour in another part; then she wondered whether at the spot where she now was it would be seen sooner or later than at Philadelphia. This doubt her science could not resolve, and it held her long in anxious suspense; but overwearied nature at length claimed her rights, and she sank into an unrefreshing dreamy slumber, in which the images of Wingenund, Mahéga, and Reginald Brandon were stalking confusedly over an eclipsed and darkened region of earth.

Early on the following morning, Mahéga, who had resolved not to lose this favourable opportunity for working upon the fears of Prairie-bird, caused a pile of dry branches of wood to be placed round a tree, which stood nearly opposite to her tent, to which he ordered Wingenund to be secured with thongs of bison-hide; after which he and his warriors seated themselves in a semicircle before their victim, passing the pipe deliberately from mouth to mouth, as if to enjoy his suspense and terror.

If such was their object, it met with little success, for the young Delaware, in the brightest day of his youth and freedom, had never worn so proud and lofty an air as that which now sat enthroned upon his brow.

"A thousand warriors of the Lenapé, whose blood is in my veins, have gone before me to the happy fields; they knew not fear, and I, the last of their children, will bring no shame upon their race. When I come they will say, 'Welcome, Wingenund!' and before many winters and summers are passed, War-Eagle and Netis, Prairie-bird and the Black Father, will join me, and the blue eyes of the Lily of Mooshanne will be there also, and we will dwell in a land of streams and flowers, of numberless deer and abundant corn, unvexed by cold, or want, or pain."

Such was the vision that rose before the mental eye of the youth, and so completely was he engrossed by it, that he took not the slightest notice of the group assembled to put him to a slow and agonizing death.

Meanwhile Prairie-bird having prayed earnestly to Heaven to support her, and pardon the deceit which she was about to practise, dressed herself with more than usual care, and coming forth from her tent, stood before Mahéga with a dignity of demeanour, to the effect of which even his fierce and intractable nature was not insensible. He rose not, however, at her approach, but contented himself with inquiring, "Has Olitipa come to save her brother's life, or to kill him?"

"Neither," replied the maiden firmly; "she is come to give good counsel to Mahéga; let him beware how he neglects it."

"Let not Olitipa's speech travel in circles," said the angry chief. "Mahéga has said that this day she should consent to be his wife, or she must see that feeble boy burned before her eyes, —there are but two paths,—which does Olitipa choose?"

"The feet of foolish men often wander where there is no path at all," replied Prairie-bird; and she added, with solemnity, pointing upward to Heaven: "There is only *one* path and one Guide, the Great Spirit who dwells above!"

Those of the Osages who were familiar with the Delaware tongue in which she was speaking, looked at each other, as if wondering at her words, but Mahéga, whose passion was only increased by her exceeding beauty, answered vehemently,

"It is easy for Olitipa to talk and to make children believe that her words are those of the Great Spirit—Mahéga is not a child."

"If he compare his strength with that of the Great Spirit," said the maiden boldly, "Mahéga's is less than the least finger of a child. Who can tell the power of the Great Spirit? The strong wind is his breath,—the thunder is his voice, the sun is his smile. If He is angry, and withdraws the sun, day is turned into night—darkness and fear dwell in the hearts of men."

The energy of her language and manner were not altogether without their effect even upon the stern nature of Mahéga; nevertheless, he replied,

"These are but the notes of singing-birds. Mahéga waits for the choice of Olitipa,—she becomes his wife, or the fire is kindled at the feet of Wingenund."

Prairie-bird cast an anxious glance athwart the blue vault above; not a cloud was in the sky, and the sun shone with the full brightness of an American July. She would not yet abandon hope, but, making a strong and successful effort to maintain her composure, she said in a firm, impressive tone, "Mahéga, let there be a bargain between us; you seek Olitipa for a wife; if it be the will of the Great Spirit, she will submit, and her brother's life will be spared; but if the Great Spirit is displeased, and shows his anger by drawing a cloak over the face of that bright sun in the heavens, Mahéga will obey his will, and let the brother of Olitipa go away unhurt. Is Mahéga content that it shall be so?"

"He is," replied the chief, "if the sign be such as he, and the Osage warriors may look upon with wonder; not a mist, or dark cloud."

"It will be such as will make Mahéga *tremble*," replied the maiden with dignity. "Warriors of the Washashe, you have heard the treaty. Before the sun has reached yon western peak, the answer of the Great Spirit will be known." Having thus spoken, she withdrew into the tent, leaving the Osages gazing upon each other with undisguised awe and amazement.

The maiden threw herself upon her couch in an agony of suspense, greater than can be described! It was terrible to think that her every hope of escaping from the dreadful alternative, was staked upon a sentence in an almanac, of the correctness of which she had not the slightest power to judge. Even the well-intentioned attempts at consolation made by her affectionate Lita, were of no avail; her unhappy mistress entreated her to remain at the door of the tent, and report whatever might occur; within and without a profound stillness reigned. The prisoner stood motionless by the sapling to which he was bound; Mahéga smoked his pipe in the full confidence of anticipated triumph, surrounded by his warriors, who, less sceptical, or more superstitious than their chief, looked and listened, expecting some confirmation of the last words of Prairie-bird.

Although the sun could not be opposite the rock which she had pointed out for nearly three hours, of which not a fourth part had yet elapsed, the anxious girl began to imagine that hope was at an end. Visions of future degradation and misery shot through her brain; she tore from her hot brow the fillet that confined her hair, which floated in glossy luxuriance over her shoulders. The reproaches of Reginald Brandon rung in her ears. The loathed embrace of Mahéga crept over her shuddering frame! At this crisis her eye fell upon the handle of the sharp knife concealed in her bosom; she drew it forth; the triumph of the powers of Evil seemed at hand, when a cry of surprise and terror from Lita recalled her wandering senses. She sprang to the door; visible darkness was spreading over the scene, and the terrified Osages were looking upward to the partially obscured disk of the sun, over the centre of which an opaque circular body was spread; a brilliant ring being left around its outer ridge.*

Prairie-bird gazed upon the wondrous spectacle like one entranced; the late fearful struggle in her breast had given a supernatural lustre to her eye; her frame was still under high nervous excitement, and as, with long hair floating down her back, she pointed with one hand to the eclipsed sun, and with the other to Mahéga, well might the savage imagine that he saw before him a Prophetess whose will the Spirit of Fire must obey. Under the influence of awe and dread, which he strove in vain to conceal, he moved forward and said to her, "It is enough! let Olitipa speak to the Great Spirit that the light may come again."

The sound of his voice recalled the mind of Prairie-bird to a consciousness of what had passed. She answered not, but with a gesture of assent motioned to him to withdraw, and supporting herself against one of the trees that grew in front of her tent, she knelt beside it, and veiling her face in the redundant tresses of her hair, found relief in a flood of tears. Overwhelmed by a sense of the merciful interposition by which she and her brother had been saved, and by a feeling of deep contrition for the sudden impulse of self-destruction to which, in a moment of mental agony, she had yielded, she thought neither of the continuance nor the withdrawing of the dark phenomenon of external nature, but of the evil gloom which had for the time eclipsed the light of grace in her heart, and the tears which bedewed her cheek were tears of mingled penitence and gratitude.

Still, Nature held on her appointed course; after a few minutes the moon passed onward in her path, and the rays of the sun, no longer intercepted, again shed their brightness over earth and sky.

The Osages, attributing these effects to the communing of Prairie-bird with the Great Spirit,

* It is unnecessary to inform the reader that neither the date nor the description of this solar eclipse is intended to challenge scientific criticism. Merely the general features are preserved of that kind of solar eclipse, which is termed "annular," and which takes place when the eclipse, though central, is not total, on account of the moon not being near enough to hide the whole of the sun, in which case part of the latter is seen as a bright ring round the part hidden by the moon.

ou in silent awe as she arose to retire to her
t, and her secret humiliation became, in their
s, her triumph.

Mahéga, finding that he had no pretext for re-
ing to release Wingenund, and that his war-
rs evidently expected him to fulfil his prom-
, ordered the youth to be unbound; and in the
ght of his generosity, desired that some food
ght be offered to him, which Wingenund
rnfully rejected.

The Osage chief having called aside two of
se most devoted to him, spoke to them a few
rds apart; and then addressing his liberated
soner in the Delaware tongue, he said, "The
age warriors will conduct Wingenund two
urs on his journey; he will then be free to go
here he likes, but if he is again found skulk-
g round the Osage camp, nothing shall save
s life."

Wingenund knew that he was to be turned
ose in a desolate region, unarmed and half-
arved, but his proud spirit would not permit
m to ask the slightest boon of his enemy; and
ithout a word of reply, without even directing
look towards his sister's tent, he turned and
llowed his conductors.

For several miles they pursued the back-foot*
f the trail by which they had come from the
astward, Wingenund being placed in the cen-
e without weapon of any kind, and the two
ages marching one before, and the other be-
ind him, being well armed with bow, knife, and
omahawk. The youth, unconscious that they
ad secret instructions from Mahéga to kill him
s soon as they reached a convenient and suffi-
iently distant spot, made no attempt to escape,
ut walked quietly between them, considering
within himself whether he should endeavour to
join his party, or persevere in hovering in the
eighbourhood of the Osages; if a suspicion of
Mahéga's treachery did cross his mind, he al-
owed it not to influence his bearing, for he
oved steadily forward, not even turning his
ad to watch the Osage behind him.

About five or six miles from Mahéga's camp,
e trail passed along the edge of a low wood
hich skirted the banks of the same stream that
wed through the upper valley. This was the
ace where they proposed to kill their prisoner,
d hide his body in the bushes, the chief hav-
g commanded that the murder should be kept
ret from the rest of his party. They had just
ssed a thicket on the side of the trail, when
terrible battle-cry of War-Eagle rose behind
m, and his tomahawk clove the skull of the
age in the rear. Quick as thought, Winge-
nd sprang upon the one in front, and pinion-
his arms; the Osage tried in vain to disen-
ge them from the grasp of his light and active
ponent. Brief was the struggle, for the dead-
weapon of the Delaware chief descended
ain, and the second Osage lay a corpse upon
trail.

The brothers, having exchanged an affection-
but hasty greeting, took the spoils from their
emies according to Indian fashion, War-Eagle
ntenting himself with their scalps, and his
ther taking such weapons and articles of
dress as his present condition rendered necessa-
ry for his comfort and defence; after which,
they threw the two bodies into the thicket into
which the Osages had intended to cast that of
Wingenund, and continued their course at a
rapid rate towards the eastward, War-Eagle re-
lating as they went the events which had brought
him so opportunely to the scene of action; they
were briefly as follows:

When he left his party, he never halted nor
slackened his speed until he saw the smoke of
the Osage camp-fire; concealing himself in the
adjoining wood, he had witnessed all the sur-
prising occurrences of the day; and in the event
of the Osages actually proceeding to set fire to
the faggots around Wingenund, he was pre-
pared to rush upon them alone, and either res-
cue his brother or perish with him; but, with
the true self-command and foresight of an In-
dian, he kept this desperate and almost hopeless
attempt for the last chance; and when to his
surprise and joy he saw the prisoner sent upon
the trail with a guard of only two Osages, he
took advantage of a bank of rising ground, be-
hind which he crept, and moving swiftly forward
under its shelter, gained unperceived the thicket,
where he had so successfully waylaid them.

Fearing a pursuit, the brothers never abated
their speed throughout the evening, or the early
portion of the night. A few hours before dawn,
some scattered bushes near the path offering
them a precarious shelter, they lay down to
snatch a short repose; a mouthful of dried bison-
meat, which remained in War-Eagle's belt, he
gave to his exhausted brother; and one blanket
covering them both, they slept soundly and un-
disturbed until the sun was high in heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mahéga finds the Bodies of his two Followers slain by War Eagle.—Some Reflections on Indian Character.—War Eagle returns to his Friends, and the Osage Chief pushes his Way further into the Mountains.

Mahega waited anxiously the return of the two men whom he had sent with Wingenund, being desirous to learn whether they had faithfully executed the treacherous commission with which he had entrusted them. When he found that the evening passed away, and that the successive hours of the night brought no intelligence of them, he became alarmed lest they should have fallen in with some hostile band of Indians, an occurrence which, in addition to the loss of two of his warriors, would threaten imminen danger to his whole party.

At the earliest peep of dawn he set out in search of them, accompanied by three of his followers, giving orders to the remainder to observe a strict watch during his absence. Traversing the little valley in front of his camp with hasty strides, he struck into the eastward trail, and followed it with unabated speed until he reached the spot where the deadly struggle of the preceding evening had arisen. Here the indications were too evident to leave a moment's doubt upon his mind; the grass on and beside the trail was stained with blood, and from the neighbouring thicket were heard the snarls and yells of a pack of wolves quarrelling over their horrible banquet; while high in air several buzzards were wheeling round and round, as if endeavouring to find courage to descend and dispute the prey with the quadruped spoilers.

* When a trail is made by a party on a march, the grass of course, trodden down in the same direction as that in ich they are going. A party travelling along it from opposite quarter, are said to take the back-foot of the il. The author heard the expression used by an experi-ed Western hunter, but is not aware whether it is in mon use; at all events it explains its own meaning sig-rly enough.

Dashing into the thicket, and driving the snarling wolves before him, Mahéga found his worst fears realized, and his horror-struck warriors stood in silence beside the mangled remains of their comrades. The conduct of Indians under such circumstances is uncertain and various as their mood, their impulse, their tribe, and their age. Sometimes they indulge in fearful threats of vengeance; sometimes in the most woful howlings and lamentations; at others, they observe a silence as still as the death which they are contemplating.

The Osages, on this occasion, following the example of their leader, spoke not a word, although the sight before them (far too horrible for description) was sufficient to try the strongest nerves; it was chiefly by the immoveable firmness of his character, that Mahéga had gained and maintained the despotic influence which he exercised over his followers; neither did it fail him on this occasion, for he proceeded to examine the mutilated remains of his deceased warriors with his usual coolness and sagacity, in order that he might discover by whom the deed had been perpetrated; on a close inspection of the skulls, he found that both had been fractured by a tomahawk blow, which had fallen in a direction almost vertical, but rather at a posterior angle of inclination, whence he immediately inferred that they had been killed by some enemy who had surprised and attacked them from behind, and not in an open fight; after a long and careful observation of the fractures he was of opinion that they were made by the same weapon. This inference, however, he kept to himself, and directing two of his followers to pay such offices to the dead, as were possible under the circumstances, and then to return to the camp, he went forward with the remaining Osage, to satisfy himself as to the manner in which the calamity had occurred; he remembered to have seen Wingenund starting on the trail, and although he knew him to be bold and active, he could not for an instant entertain the belief that a stripling, wearied with a sleepless night, stiff from being so many hours bound with thongs, and totally unprovided with arms, could have killed his two guards, who were strong, wary, and well-armed men!

For some distance Mahéga continued his course in moody silence, the beaten trail affording no indication sufficient to guide him in his conjecture, but at length he reached a place where it crossed a small rivulet, the flat banks of which were sprinkled with a kind of gravelly sand; here he paused and examined every inch of the ground with the eye of a lynx, nor was it long before he detected the foot-prints which he sought, a smaller and a greater, the latter shewing longer intervals and a deeper impression.

Rising from his stooping scrutiny, the eyes of the chief glared with fury, as he turned to his follower, and in a voice almost inarticulate with rage, groaned the hated name of War-Eagle.

"It is," he continued vehemently, "plain as the moon in the sky, the trail of the cursed Lenapé, and the light foot of his brother; see here, War-Eagle has walked through the water, and Wingenund has sprung over it, the dew has fallen since they passed, they are far before us—but Mahéga must not sleep till their scalps are in his belt. Is Toweno ready?" inquired the fierce chief, tightening his girdle while he loosened the tomahawk suspended from it.

"*Toweno is ready,*" replied the Indian, "to fight or run by the side of Mahéga, from morning until night; his hand is not weak nor are his feet slow; but the Great Chief must not let the angry spirit bring a cloud before his eyes."

"Let Toweno speak," said Mahega controlling his fierce impatience, "his words will find a path to open ears."

"War-Eagle," pursued the Osage, "is swift of foot and cunning as a twice-trapped wolf. He is not come upon this far war-path alone. Wingenund has been prowling round the camp, and while Mahéga follows the trail of War-Eagle, the youth may guide the pale-face warrior called Netis, with his band, to the encampment of the Washashe. Toweno has need of no more words."

Mahéga saw in a moment the truth and force of his follower's suggestion, and smothering for the moment his passion for revenge, he resolved to return at once to his encampment.

"The counsel of Toweno is good," said he; "when a friend speaks, Mahéga is not deaf."

Among the features that distinguish the character of the North American Indian, there is none more remarkable, none more worthy the study and the imitation of civilized man, than the patience and impartial candour with which they listen to the advice or opinion of others; although so prone to be swayed by passion and governed by impulse, the Indian seems to have a wonderful power of laying aside these predispositions, when discussing a matter privately with a friend, or openly in council. The decorum with which all their public discussions are conducted, has been observed and recorded by every writer familiar with their habits, from the time of Charlevoix, and of the interesting "Lettres Edifiantes," to the present day. Colden, Tanner, Mackenzie, and many others who have described the Northern tribes, concur in bearing their testimony to the truth of this observation; Heckewalder, Loskiel, Smith, Jefferson, confirm it in the central region; and the Spanish writers bear frequent witness to it in their descriptions of the Southern tribes, whom they met with in their campaigns in Florida, and the adjacent country. In reading the account given of the numerous tribes inhabiting the vast region between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains, by Clarke, Lewis, Long, and others, the same observation forces itself upon us almost at every page, and it is the more remarkable when we reflect upon two facts—first, that we find this characteristic attributed to forty or fifty different nations inhabiting a continent larger than Europe, by the concurring testimony of travellers from different countries, and holding the most opposite opinions.

Secondly, we do not find a similar characteristic distinguishing other savages, or nomadic tribes in Asia, Africa, or the Pacific Islands.

There is not a public body in Europe, from the British Parliament down to the smallest burgh meeting, that might not study with advantage the proceedings of an Indian council, whether as described in the faithful pages of the German missionaries, or, as it may still be seen by any one who has leisure and inclination to visit those remote regions, where the Indian character is least changed and contaminated by intercourse with the whites. Such an observer would find his attention attracted to two remarkable facts; first, that no speaker is ever interrupted; and, secondly, that only those speak who from age, rank, and deeds, are entitled to

It is a popular and plausible reply to say that discussions concerning the complicated business of a great country, cannot be carried on like the unimportant "talks" of these savage tribes; this reasoning is shallow and full of sophistry, for many of the Indian councils above referred to have involved all the dearest interests of the nation; their soil, their pride, their ancestral traditions, all were at stake, perhaps all with little more than a nominal alternative, to be bartered for the grasping white man's beads, whiskey, and subsidies. In these councils, every listening Indian must have felt that his own home, the lodge built by his father, and the patch of maize cultivated by his family, were dependent on the issue of the negotiation, and yet it is not upon record that a chief, or elder-brave was ever interrupted in his speech, or that the decorum of the council was infringed by irregularity or tumult on the part of those who might have considered themselves injured and aggrieved.

Even in regard to time, it is a great mistake to suppose that anything is gained by interruption, for an obstinate talker will carry his point in the end; and although the persevering exclamations, and groanings, and crowings of an impatient House of Commons, may succeed in drowning his voice, and forcing him to sit down, he will rise again on some other occasion and inflict upon his hearers a speech whose bulk and bitterness are both increased by the suppressed fermentation which it has undergone.

Leaving the moody and dispirited Osage chief to find his way back to his encampment, we will now return to Reginald Brandon and his party, whom we left starting westward on the trail, marching in regular order, and prepared, without delaying their progress, to repel any hostile attempt on the part of the Crows. The latter had seemed, however, so impressed with the strength, discipline, and appointments of the white men's force, now that it had received a strong reinforcement, that they gave up all present intention of molesting it, and went off in an opposite direction in search of game, horses, or booty, where these might be acquired with less risk and danger.

Reginald and Ethelston went together on the line of march; and although the spirits of the former were damped by the recent and melancholy fate of the Crow youth, in whom he had felt much interest, the buoyant hilarity of his disposition did not long resist his friend's endeavours to banish that subject from his thoughts, and to turn the conversation to topics more immediately connected with the object of their present expedition.

Reginald having once confided to Ethelston his love for Prairie-bird, found a pleasure in describing to him her beauty, her natural grace, her simplicity; in short, all those charms and attractions which had carried by storm the fortress of his heart; and it seemed that his friend was no less willing to listen than he to talk upon the subject; repeating question after question, regarding her with an unwearied intensity of curiosity that excited at length the surprise of Reginald himself.

"Indeed, Edward," he said, laughing, "did I not know that you are devoted to a certain lady on the banks of the Muskingum, and that your attachments are reasonably steady, I could almost believe that the fidelity and eloquence with which I have described Prairie-bird had made you fall in love with her yourself."

"Perhaps you are claiming more merit for your own eloquence than is due to it," said Ethelston, in a similar tone; "you forget that before I joined you, Paul Müller and I had travelled many hundred miles together; and it is a topic upon which he speaks as warmly and partially as yourself."

"Well he may!" replied Reginald with energy, "for she owes everything to his affectionate care and instruction, in return for which she loves and venerates him as if he were her father."

In such conversation did the friends while away many weary hours on the march; and at the midday halt, and evening camp, they were joined by the worthy Missionary, who, justly proud of his pupil, and knowing that he was addressing those who would not soon be weary of hearing her praises, told them many anecdotes of her early youth, with an earnestness and feeling which often caused Reginald to avert his face, and Ethelston to shade his brow thoughtfully with his hand.

Nor was the march unenlivened by scenes of a merrier kind, for Pierre, Baptiste, and Monsieur Perrot kept up a constant round of fun and raillery around their camp-kettle; the latter continuing to act as chief cook for all the white men and half-bred in the party, and leaving the Delawares to dress their food after their own fancy. Provisions were abundant in the camp, and Perrot contrived by his ingenuity to give a variety both in appearance and flavour to supplies, which in truth consisted of little more than parched maize, biscuit, coffee, and bison meat. He talked incessantly, and his lively sallies not only amused his two companions, but often drew a smile from Reginald, in spite of the anxiety occasioned by the object of the expedition.

"Master Baptiste," said the valet cook, (as nearly as his language may be rendered into English,) "methinks those great hands of yours are better skilled in chopping Sioux skulls, or felling bee-trees, than in the science of butchery. see, here, what unchristian lumps of meat you have brought me to dress!"

"Were it not for these great hands, as you call them," replied the sturdy Guide, "you, Master Perrot, with those fine-skinned fingers, would often ere this have seen little of either deer or bison-meat for your supper!"

"As for that, I deny not that you are tolerably successful in hunting, and your load of venison is sometimes brought decently home; but in the cutting up of a bison, your education has been much neglected."

"It may be so, Monsieur Perrot," answered Baptiste; "I do not pretend to much skill in the matter, and yet methinks I should understand as much of it as one who had never seen a bison a month since; and who could not now dress a cow's udder half so well as an Osage squaw.' Pierre laughed outright at his comrade's depreciation of Perrot's culinary skill, and the latter, whose temper was not a whit ruffled by this disparagement of his talents, inquired with the utmost gravity,

"Pray, Baptiste, instruct me in this matter, for I doubt not, although you have so grievously mutilated the ox, that your method of dressing the cow's udder must be worth learning."

"Nay," replied Baptiste, "I will show you that when we come among cows and squaws meanwhile, I recommend you to make yourself a spare peruke. as we may soon be running too

of those Osages, or some other roving Indians, who may chance to carry off that moveable scalp on the top of your head."

This allusion to Perrot's disaster and narrow escape among the Sioux, turned the laugh against him, but he quickly checked its current by placing before his companions some buffalo steaks, and cakes of maize flour, which practically contradicted all that they had been saying in disparagement of the good-humoured Frenchman's cookery.

Towards the close of the second day's march, one of the Delawares, who had been sent forward to reconnoitre, galloped to the rear and reported that he had seen one or two men at great distance a-head, nearly in the line of the trail which they were now following. Reginald immediately sprung upon Nekimi, who was walking like a pet dog at his side; and, accompanied by Ethelston, rode forward to examine the strangers with his telescope. The undulations of the intervening ground hid them for a considerable time from his view, and when they reappeared they were near enough to be clearly distinguished through his glass.

"War-Eagle," he exclaimed, "heaven be praised! it is my brave Indian brother returning with young Wingenund. Edward, I will now present to you the noblest creature that ever yet I encountered in human shape. My feelings would prompt me to rush forward and embrace him; but we must conform ourselves to Indian usage here, or we shall lose the good opinion of our Delaware friends."

Reginald had confided to his friend all that had passed between himself and War-Eagle, not even omitting his unfortunate and long-cherished passion for Prairie-bird, so that Ethelston awaited his approach with no ordinary interest.

As the Delaware chieftain advanced with erect front, his expanded chest thrown slightly forward, and the fine symmetry of his form developed in every movement as he stepped lightly over the prairie, Ethelston felt that he had never seen, either in nature or in the works of art, a finer specimen of manhood; and when he witnessed the grave simplicity which mingled with his cordial greeting of Reginald Brandon, he could not deny that features, form, and bearing stamped the Delaware chieftain at once as one of the lords of the creation. Neither did the gentle gracefulness of the slighter figure by whom he was accompanied escape Ethelston's notice, and he felt no difficulty in recognising in the interesting features of the youth, that Wingenund of whose high and amiable qualities he had heard so much from Reginald.

"These are, indeed," said Ethelston to himself, "worthy descendants of the Lenapé princes, whose sway in bygone days extended over many hundred leagues of fertile territory, from the Ohio to the Atlantic coast; whose broad lands are now tilled by the Saxon plough, on the site of whose ancient villages now stand the churches and the populous streets of Baltimore, and the city of brotherly love. With the loss of their dominion, most of these once-powerful tribes have lost the highest and best characteristics of their race; subdued by the rifle, corrupted by the silver, degraded by the ardent spirits of the white man, they present but too often a spectacle in which it is difficult to recognise any traces of *the attributes* with which the narratives of our *early travellers and missionaries* invest them. *But these are indeed, features* which a Titian would not have scorned to delineate; these are forms which the pencil of Michael Angelo and the chisel of Praxiteles would have rejoiced to immortalize."

While these thoughts were rapidly passing through the mind of Ethelston, the greeting between Reginald and War-Eagle was exchanged; and the former had given to his Indian brother a hasty sketch of the events which had occurred in his absence, and of those which had led to the reinforcement brought by Ethelston. A gleam of joy shot athwart the features of the Delaware, as he learned the vengeance which his warriors had taken of their enemies; and his quick eye glanced with gratified pride over the scalps which they displayed, and the magnificent bear-claw collar dependant from Attō's neck. The Lenapé braves saw too that the tomahawk of their leader had not slept in its belt on his solitary war-path, for the scalps of the two unfortunate Osages whom he had slain hung close to its handle; and though there was no shout of triumph, an audible murmur of satisfaction ran through the whole band.

When Reginald presented Ethelston to War-Eagle as his earliest and most faithful friend from childhood, the chief, taking him by the hand, said, "The friend of Nenis is the friend of War-Eagle,—their hearts are one; he is very welcome." Reginald then presented Wingenund to his friend, as the gallant youth who had saved his life on the banks of the Muskingum.

"I feel as if I had long known him," said Ethelston, shaking his hand cordially; "I have come lately from Mooshanne, where his name is not forgotten."

"Is the Lily of Mooshanne well?" inquired the youth, fixing his dark and earnest eyes full upon the countenance of the person whom he was addressing. Ethelston had been prepared by his friend's description of Wingenund for a demeanour and character highly interesting, but there was a melody, a pathos, a slight tremour in the tone in which he spoke those few words, there was also in his countenance a touching expression of melancholy that thrilled to the heart of Ethelston. How quick is the jealous eye of love! Ethelston knew that Wingenund had passed only one day in the society of Lucy, yet he saw in an instant the deep impression which that day had left on the young Indian's mind.

"The Lily of Mooshanne is well," he replied. "If she had known that I should visit her brother, and his Lenapé friends, she would have bid me speak many kind words to them from her."

Wingenund passed on, and War-Eagle related to the two friends the leading circumstances of his own expedition, omitting all mention of the fatigue, the hunger, the sleepless nights that he had undergone, before he discovered and reached the Osage camp.

As he described the scene of Wingenund being tied to the post, with the dried faggots at his feet, and the appearance of Prairie-bird when Mahéga called upon her to pronounce her own or her brother's fate, both of his auditors held their breath with anxious suspense, which gave place to astonishment, as he proceeded to relate with undisguised awe, the mystery of the solar eclipse, which led to the liberation of Wingenund.

When he had concluded his narrative, Reginald was speechless, and Ethelston catching the Delaware's arm, inquired in a low whisper,

"Has the Osage dared, or will he dare to make Prairie-bird his wife by force?"

"He has not," replied the Chief, "the words of Olitipa, and the black sun, made him afraid." He added, drawing himself proudly to his full height, "Had the wolf threatened to touch her with his paw, the tomahawk of War-Eagle would have pierced his heart, or the bones of the Lenapé chief and his brother would have been picked by the buzzards of the mountains." So saying, War-Eagle joined his expectant warriors.

In the mean time Mahéga returned to his camp, in a vexed and gloomy state of mind; as he passed the tent of Prairie-bird a darker frown lowered upon his brow, and having entered his lodge, he seated himself, without speaking to any of those who had assembled there, in expectation of his return.

The youngest of the Osages present having handed him a lighted pipe, retired to a corner of the lodge, where he resumed his occupation of sharpening the head of a barbed arrow, leaving the chief to his own meditations. These dwelt mainly upon Prairie-bird, and were of a nature so mingled and vague, as to cause him the greatest perplexity; the effect of her beauty and attractions upon his passions had rather increased than diminished. He loved her as much as one so fierce and selfish could love another; yet, on the other hand, he felt that he ought to hate her, as being the sister of War-Eagle, and the betrothed of the man who had struck and disgraced him; with these contending feelings, there was blended a superstitious awe of her communion with the world of spirits, and a remote hope that some of these supernatural agencies might turn her heart in his favour, and induce her not only to become his bride, but zealously to employ all her mysterious powers in the furtherance of his ambitious schemes.

Such was the train of thought pursued by the Osage, as he leaned against the pile of furs that supported his back, and stretching his huge limbs at their ease, watched the eddying wreaths of fragrant smoke, which, gently puffed from his mouth and *nostril*, wound their slow way to the fissures in the lodge-roof by which they escaped.*

The suggestion of Toweno had made a strong impression upon Mahéga's mind, and led him to expect at no distant period, an attack on the part of the Delawares, and, as he was uncertain of the force which his enemy might bring against him, he resolved to make a timely retreat to some spot, where a pursuit, if attempted by the Delawares, might enable him to take them at a disadvantage.

Calling to him an Osage, who was leaning against one of the outer posts that supported the lodge, he desired him to make, with a comrade, a careful search of the neighbourhood, and to report any trail or suspicious appearance that they might find, and when he had given these orders he summoned Toweno, and started with him towards the head of the little valley, without informing him of the object which he had in view, but as the latter was the only person to whom the chief had entrusted the secret of the cache, where his most valuable spoils were deposited, and as they were now marching in that direction, he was not at a loss to divine Mahéga's intentions. After a brief silence, the chief said to his follower, "Do the thoughts of Toweno walk upon the same path with the thoughts of Mahéga?"

"They do," he replied.

"Can Toweno speak them?"

"Mahéga intends to leave the camp before the Lenapé come, and taking some goods with him as presents to the mountain tribes, to find a safe place where the enemy cannot follow him."

"Toweno says well," answered the chief, with a grim smile, "but that is not enough, the Lenapé must be made a fool, he must be put upon a wrong trail."

"That is good, if it can be done," said Toweno gravely, "but it is not easy to put sand in the eyes of War-Eagle."

"Mahéga will put sand into his eyes, and a knife into his heart before this moon becomes a circle," replied the chief, clutching as he went the haft of his scalpknife, and unconsciously lengthening his stride under the excitement produced by the thoughts of a conflict with his hated foe. They had now reached the "cache," which was a large dry hole in the side of a rocky bank, the entrance to which was closed by a stone, and admirably concealed by a dense thicket of brambles and wild raspberry bushes; having rolled away the stone, Mahéga withdrew from the cache a plentiful supply of beads, vermilion, powder, and cloths of various colour, being part of the plunder taken from the camp of the unfortunate Delawares, and wrapping in two blankets as much as he and his companion could carry, they replaced the stone, carefully concealing their footprints as they retreated, by strewing them with leaves and grass. At a spot very near the cache was the skeleton of a deer, which Mahéga had killed on a former occasion, and purposely dragged thither. As soon as they reached this point, they took no further precaution to conceal their trail, because even if it were found, the party discovering it would stop under the impression that it was made by the hunters who had killed the deer. On returning to the camp they met the two Osages who had been despatched to reconnoitre, and who reported that they had found one fresh Indian trail in the woods opposite the little valley, and that they had followed it as far as the stream, where, from its direction and appearance, they were assured it was the trail of War-Eagle; and Mahéga now first learned that his daring foe had been within eighty yards of the spot selected for the torture of Wingenund. His was not a nature to give way to idle regrets; equally a stranger to fear and to remorse, the future troubled him but little, the past not at all, excepting when it afforded him food wherewith to cherish his revenge; so the information now received did not interrupt him in carrying into execution his plans for retreat. Accordingly, he desired Toweno to summon his warriors to a council, and in a short time the band, now reduced to eight, besides himself, assembled in front of his lodge. Here he harangued them with his usual cunning sagacity, pointing out to them the risk of remaining in their present position, and setting before them in the most

* The herbs mingled by the Indians with a small proportion of tobacco, are frequently of a light and fragrant flavour; sometimes, too, they have some narcotic properties. In order fully to enjoy their qualities after the Indian fashion, the smoker must inhale the smoke by the mouth and expel it through the nostril, in which operation the nerves and nasal vessels of the latter experience a pungent sensation which some consider highly agreeable, and is not unlike that which is caused by a pinch of mild, or perfumed snuff.

favourable light the advantages which might accrue from their falling in with some of the peaceable tribes among the mountains, and carrying back from them to the banks of the Osage and Kansas rivers a plentiful cargo of beaver and other valuable skins. Having concluded his harangue, he opened before them the largest (although the least precious) of the bales brought from the cache, which he divided equally among them, so that each warrior knowing what belonged to him, might use it as he thought fit; the remaining bale he ordered to be carefully secured in wrappers of hide, and to be reserved for negotiations for the benefit of the whole band; the Osages were loud in their approbation of the speech, and of the liberal distribution of presents by which it had been accompanied, and they retired from his lodge to make immediate preparations for departure.

While these were rapidly advancing, Mahéga, who had made himself thoroughly familiar with the neighbouring locality, considered and matured his plans for retreat, the chief object of which was to mislead the Delawares in the event of their attempting a pursuit. The result of his meditations he confined to his own breast, and his followers neither wished nor cared to know it, having full reliance upon his sagacity and judgment. Meanwhile Prairie-bird remained quietly in her tent, grateful for the deliverance of her young brothers, and indulging in a thousand dreamy visions of her own escape, contrived and effected by Reginald and War-Eagle. These were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Lita, who, while engaged in carrying water from the brook, had gathered from one of the Osages some intelligence of what was going forward. If the truth must be told, this Indian, separated from the woman-kind of his own tribe, had begun to look on the expressive gipsy countenance of the Comanche girl with an eye of favour; and she not being slow to detect the influence which she had acquired, encouraged him just enough to render him communicative, and willing to offer her such attentions as were admissible in their relative situations. Yet in her heart she scorned him as a "dog of an Osage," and though he knew her to be only a slave, there was something in her manner that attracted him in spite of himself; it was not difficult for the quick girl to gather from her admirer the news of Wingenund's escape, and the death of the two Osages sent to guard him, but when she heard the latter attributed with an execration to the hand of War-Eagle, she was obliged to avert her face, that her informant might not observe the look of triumph that gleamed in her dark eyes.

Having ascertained at the same time, that Mahéga was about to strike his camp and resume his march, she rewarded the Osage by an arch smile, that sent him away contented, while she, taking up her water vessel pursued her way to her mistress's tent.

To the latter, Lita lost no time in communicating what she had learned, and was disappointed to observe that Prairie-bird seemed rather vexed than gratified by the intelligence.

"Does Olitipa not rejoice?" inquired she eagerly, "that the scalps of the Washashe dogs who kept Wingenund prisoner are hanging at the belt of the Lenapé chief?"

"Olitipa is tired of blood," answered the maiden, mournfully, "and the loss of his warriors will make Mahéga more fierce and cruel to us. See, already he prepares to go on a distant path, where the eyes of War-Eagle and Netis may not find us;" and the poor girl shuddered at the prospect of a journey to regions yet more wild and remote, and a captivity yet more hopeless of deliverance.

"Let him go where never Washashe foot stepped before," replied Lita, "where no trail is seen but that of the bighorn, and the black-tailed deer; War-Eagle will follow and will find him."

Prairie-bird smiled sadly at the eagerness of her companion, and then desired her aid in getting their wardrobe and few moveables ready for the expected journey. While they were thus employed Mahéga called Prairie-bird to the door of her tent, where she found the chief, with his arm wrapped round with a cloth; and believing him to be wounded, she acceded at once to his request that she would give him one of her kerchiefs for a bandage. During the remainder of the evening she saw nothing more of him or of his people, and she slept undisturbed until an hour before dawn, when she was awakened by the bustle of preparation for departure.

As soon as her light tent was struck and fastened to the poles which supported it, she observed that a kind of cradle had been constructed by the Osages, which was covered with skins, and was adapted to the purpose of carrying herself or her moveables, when slung to the tent poles, as well as to convey its contents dry over any river that might obstruct their passage.

The Osage party was now divided into two, of which one was reserved by Mahéga for his own guidance, the other being entrusted to that of Toweno; all the horses were placed under the charge of the latter, including those carrying the packages, and the palfrey usually ridden by Prairie-bird; this party bent their course to the northward, and Mahéga accompanied them a few hundred yards, repeating many instructions to Toweno, which seemed from his earnest gesticulation to be both minute and important.

The heart of Prairie-bird sank within her when she saw her favourite horse led away, and herself left with Lita on foot, attended by Mahéga and four of his men; knowing, however, the inutility of any present attempt either at resistance or flight, she awaited in uncomplaining silence the further commands of her captor, although she easily saw through the mocking veil of courtesy with which he disguised his anticipated triumph over her baffled friends. To his inquiry whether she preferred travelling on foot to being carried in the wicker-frame by two of his men, she replied without hesitation, in the affirmative; upon which he presented her with a pair of moccasins, to be worn over her own, so ingeniously contrived that although they did not encumber her movements by their weight, they yet rendered it impossible that her foot-prints should be recognised, even by the practised eye of War-Eagle. A similar pair was also placed on the feet of Lita.

It may easily be imagined, that the Osages, during their residence at this encampment, made various excursions for hunting and other purposes; they had used on these occasions old trails made by native tribes or by the bison; one of these ran in a north-east direction, skirting the base of the high western hills, and offering the prospect of easy travelling, through an undulating and partially wooded country. Into this path Mahéga struck at once, leading the way himself, followed by Prairie-bird and Lita, the four Osages bringing up the rear. This line of march being adopted by the cunning chief, first

that he might have frequent opportunity of watching and speaking with the maiden, and secondly, that his men might be the better enabled to fulfil his strict injunction, that they should carefully remove any trace which she might purposely, or accidentally, leave on the trail.

Such an idea did not, however, appear to have entered the thoughts of Prairie-bird, for she followed the Osage chief with a blithe and cheerful air, replying good-humouredly to the observations, which he from time to time addressed to her, and pointing out to Lita the beauties of the scenery through which they were passing.

It was indeed a lovely region, abounding in rock, herbage, and magnificent timber; the latter affording an agreeable shelter from the rays of the sun, while the fresh breeze, blowing from the snow-capped mountains, which bounded the western prospect, rendered the exercise of walking pleasant in the highest degree.

They had followed the trail for some time without meeting with any game, when the quick eye of Mahéga detected a mountain-deer, browsing at no great distance, and in a moment an arrow from his bow pierced its flank; the wounded animal bounded onward into the glade, and the chief sprang forward in pursuit. The Osages fixed their keen and eager eyes on the chase, muttering half-aloud expressions of impatient discontent at being prevented from joining it. Swift as had been the arrow of Mahéga, it was not more so than the thought and hand of Prairie-bird, who contrived, while her guards were gazing intently on the deer and its pursuer, to let fall unperceived a small slip of paper upon the trail; so completely did she appear absorbed in watching the chase, that the movement was unnoticed even by Lita, and the party continued their way a few hundred steps, when a signal from Mahéga, now out of sight, soon brought one of his followers to assist him in cutting up the quarry.

Before leaving her tent, Prairie-bird had prepared and secreted about her person several small slips of paper, on each of which she had written the word "Follow," trusting to her own ingenuity to find an opportunity of dropping one now and then unobserved by the Osages.

Such an opportunity having now occurred, it had been successfully employed, and the maiden went forward with a lighter heart, in the confident hope that Providence would cause some friendly eye to rest upon the slight, yet guiding token left upon her path.

For two days Mahéga pursued his march leisurely, as if fearless of pursuit, halting frequently to afford rest and refreshment to Prairie-bird, and camping at night, on some sheltered spot, where his men constructed for her protection a hut, or bower of branches, over which was thrown a covering of skins; before setting out in the morning this bower was destroyed, and the branches dragged to some distance in several directions, and Mahéga, having carefully examined the spot, was the last to leave it, in order to ensure that no indication or trace of his fair prisoner might remain.

On the third day about noon they reached the banks of a broad stream, which two of the Osages crossed immediately, with instructions from their chief to make a visible trail in a N.E. direction for some distance, when they were to enter the river again at another place, and to wade or swim down it until they rejoined him; meanwhile Prairie-bird and Lita, with such articles as they wished to keep dry, were placed in the light coriole or wicker-boat covered with skins, and Mahéga guided its course down the stream, followed by the remainder of his men; they descended the bed of the river for several miles in this way, and although more than one trail appeared on the banks as a crossing place for Indians or bison, he passed them all unheeded, until he came to a broad track, which had very lately been trodden by so many feet that the trail of his own party could not be distinguished upon it; here he halted until he was rejoined by the men whom he had left behind, when they proceeded forward at a brisk pace, towards the spot which he had appointed as the rendezvous for his party in charge of the packages and the horses.

Mahéga was now in high spirits, being confident that the precautions which he had taken would throw the pursuers off the scent, and enable him to follow out his plans, which were to trade, during the summer with the Shosonies and other tribes hovering about the spurs of the mountains, procuring from them beaver and other valuable furs in exchange for the fine cloths and goods which he had brought from the Delaware camp; after which he proposed to return to the northern portion of the Osage country, enriched by his traffic, and glorying in the possession of his mysterious and beautiful bride.

Such were the projects entertained by the Osage chief, and he brooded over them so abstractedly, that he afforded to the ever-watchful Prairie-bird an opportunity of dropping another of her small slips of paper unperceived; she did not neglect it, although almost hopeless of her friends ever discovering her path after the many precautions taken by Mahéga, and the long distance down the course of the river where no trail nor trace of the passage of his party could be left.

On reaching the rendezvous he found his detachment with the horses and baggage already arrived; they had come by a circuitous route, availing themselves of several Indian trails by the way, on one of which Toweno had, by direction of his chief, scattered some shreds of the kerchief that he obtained from Prairie-bird; after which he had returned upon the same trail, and diverged into a transverse one, which had enabled him to reach the rendezvous by the time appointed.

Prairie-bird being again mounted upon her favourite palfrey, the whole party set forward with increased speed, which they did not relax until towards evening, when they saw in the distance numerous fires, betokening the neighbourhood of a populous Indian village. Mahéga then ordered a halt, and having sent forward Toweno to reconnoitre, encamped in a sheltered valley for the night. When Prairie-bird found herself once more, after the fatigues of the two preceding days, under the cover of her own tent, she looked round its small circular limits, and felt as if she were at home! casting herself upon her couch of furs, she offered up her grateful thanks to the Almighty Being who had hitherto so mercifully protected her, and soon forgot her cares and weariness in sound and refreshing slumbers.

CHAPTER XXXV.

War Eagle and his Party reach the deserted Camp of the Osages.—The Latter fall in with a strange Band of Indians, and Mahéga appears in the Character of a Diplomatist.

A BRIGHT sun shone upon the little valley, which, twenty-four hours before, had been deserted by the Osages, when a tall form glided cautiously to its entrance, half concealed by the bushes that fringed its edge. Glancing hastily around, War-Eagle, for he it was who was guiding his party in pursuit, returned to announce to them his belief that the enemy had decamped; nevertheless, the usual precautions were adopted against a surprise. A small body of Delawares were thrown forward to reconnoitre the neighbouring woods, under the command of Attō, while the chief, accompanied by Reginald, Ethelston, and the rest of the party, entered the deserted Osage encampment; every nook and cranny among the adjacent woods and rocks were diligently explored, and not till then were they convinced that their crafty foe had given them the slip. While the rest of the party were busied in this search, the eye of Reginald Brandon rested in absorbed attention upon the spot to which his steps had been first led, as if by the power of instinct; it was a small plot, completely sheltered by the rock which guarded the front of the recess; a few holes made in the turf showed where pegs had been driven in to secure a circular tent. "Here," said Reginald to Ethelston, "here is the spot trodden by her dear feet—here have her weary limbs reposed during the long watches of the night—here have her prayers been offered up at noon and eve for that rescue which we seem doomed, alas! never to accomplish!"

"Say not a word, my son," said Paul Müller, laying his hand kindly on the excited Reginald's shoulder; "say not a word, my son, which would seem to limit the power or the mercy of that Being to whom those prayers were addressed. Hope is the privilege, perseverance the duty of man; let us faithfully use these bounties, and leave the issue to His all-wise disposal."

"I am indeed ashamed of my hasty expression, worthy Father," said Reginald, frankly; "but I will draw encouragement from your suggestion, and banish every desponding thought, while there remains a chance of success, or even a glimmering of hope."

Wingenund, who had approached unobserved to the side of his friend, whispered to him, in a low voice, "Netis is right: here it was that Olitipa sat when Wingenund was a prisoner; she is not far, the Lenapé warriors never lose a trail."

While they were thus conversing, a messenger from War-Eagle summoned them to a consultation on the plan of pursuit which should be adopted.

It may not be unnecessary to inform those who have never been upon the prairies of the Far-West, that a trail is easily followed when the party pursued is in full retreat, because any indication of footsteps is a sure guide to its course; whereas, in a camping-place, where a party has remained for a considerable time, numberless paths are trodden in various directions during its stay, some for hunting excursions, some for bringing water, others for leading horses to and from their pasturage, so that the *pursuer is at a loss to discover by which of these paths those of whom he is in pursuit have retreated.*

War-Eagle being well aware that Mahega was not less skilled than himself in all the stratagems and devices of Indian warfare, set about this difficult task with a deliberation that did not suit the eager temper of Reginald Brandon; nevertheless, he had so much confidence in the sagacity of his Indian brother, that he restrained all expression of his impatience, and agreed without objection to the method proposed by him at the council. Agreeably to this plan, Paul Müller, Perrot, and several of the hunters and Delawares, remained on guard at the camp, while the main body, divided into small parties of two or three in each, were to explore every trail that offered a probability of success, and to return before nightfall to report the result of their search. War-Eagle set out, accompanied by Attō; Reginald was joined by Ethelston and Baptiste; the other parties took the respective quarters assigned to them, and Wingenund, who remained some time after they had started, left the camp alone.

The trail followed by Reginald and his friends led towards the upper part of the valley, over broken and bushy ground, intersected here and there by streamlets, and small springs, which just afforded water enough to soften the herbage, in which they were soon lost. Had he been less absorbed by the object of the expedition, Reginald could not have failed to admire the tranquil beauty of this sheltered and secluded spot; but the rich foliage of the forest trees, the merry chirrup of the birds, the fragrance exhaled by the numberless shrubs and flowers, the tempting clusters of wild raspberries, scattered around their path, all these were passed unheeded by men whose senses and faculties were centered only on *the trail*. With equal modesty and good sense, Reginald had desired Baptiste to take the lead, knowing that the sturdy forester's experience in such matters was far greater than his own.

After they had marched a considerable distance in silence, Reginald inquired the opinion of his guide.

"Why, you see," replied the latter, "the Osages have driven their horses several times this way to feed, and their marks are plain enough; but if a man may judge by the looks of the country forward, this is not likely to be the right trail. It seems to get smaller the further we go; and I'm inclined to think it's only been a hunting path into the woods."

After this unsatisfactory observation, Baptiste again went forward, until he stopped at the skeleton of a deer; the same, it may be remembered, as was mentioned in a former chapter. Here all traces of a further trail ceased, and the disappointed Reginald exclaimed,

"Baptiste, your suggestion was only too correct; we have lost our time; let us return, and search in some other direction."

"Not so fast, Master Reginald," replied the cautious Guide; "there's as many tricks in an Indian's brain as there are holes in a honeycomb. The animal has been dead some time, and, unless this grass deceives me, it has been trodden within these two days. Voyons vite, as they say up north. Stand quite still; and you, too, Master Ethelston, keep on that side of the deer's bones, while I have a bit of a hunt after the wood fashion."

So saying, the Guide, resting "The Dog" upon the skeleton, and throwing himself upon his knees, began to turn over the leaves and

examine minutely every blade of grass and fallen twig, muttering, as he pursued his task, "If War-Eagle, or one of his double-sighted Delawares were here, he would pick out this trail in no time. My eyes are not so good as they were some years back; but they will serve this purpose, however. This is only bungling work, after all: one—two; yes, I think there's been two of them. Capote! they've strewed sticks and leaves over the back-trail!" And the rough woodsman, as, creeping forward on his knees, he discovered each succeeding step on the trail, hummed snatches of an old Canadian song, the only words of which that the two friends could distinguish, being "Vogue, vogue, la bonne pirogue!"

"Has it not often been a matter of surprise to you," said Ethelston in a whisper to Reginald, "that the language, and even the dialect, of the Guide so constantly varies? Sometimes he speaks very intelligible English; at others, his phrases and exclamations are mostly French; and, on other occasions, he mingles the two most strangely together."

"I confess," replied Reginald, "the same thought has often occurred to me; yet it is not, perhaps, so strange as it would at first sight appear, when we remember the vicissitudes of his early life, the number of years that he spent in youth among the French boatmen and traders of the northern lakes, his excursions with them into the country of the Upper Sioux and the Chippewyan nations; while for the last fifteen years he has been much employed by my father, and, from his honesty and trustworthy qualities, has been thrown a great deal into constant intercourse with persons of respectability and education."

Meanwhile, Baptiste having ascertained the direction of the trail, cast his eyes forward, and, like a shrewd reasoner, jumped to his conclusion, in this instance, more correctly than is usually the case with the persons to whom he has been likened. Pushing aside the bushes which grew at the base of a rock, he soon observed a large aperture, closed by a stone of corresponding dimensions. This last was, with the aid of Reginald, soon displaced, and the "cache" of the Osages, together with the plundered treasure it contained, was exposed to view.

"So, so!" chuckled the Guide, "we have found the thieving fox's hole; an they do not cover their trail somewhat better from the eyes of War-Eagle, we shall have their skins before three nights are over; why, a town lawyer could have treed this coon!"

Reginald and Ethelston could not forbear laughing at the low estimation in which the woodsman held the ferreting powers of a town lawyer—an estimation so contrary to that entertained by those who have any experience in the capacity of a class so unjustly depreciated. They resolved to carry with them to the camp the whole contents of the cave, with a view to their being forthwith appropriated and disposed of by War-Eagle, now the chief of the tribe.

Three large blankets were easily tied into the form of so many sacks, of which each threw one over his shoulder, and they returned with their recovered spoil to the encampment.

Great was the surprise of the Delawares when they saw the three white men coming in, hot and weary with their load; greater still, when the blankets were opened, and their contents laid out upon the turf, among which were found lead, powder, cloth, knives, beads, paints, medicine-bags, and a variety of small articles, plundered from the lodge of the unfortunate Tamenund, and those adjoining. Among these were a few books and instruments belonging to Prairie-bird and Paul Müller, all of which were immediately delivered over to the latter.

War-Eagle's party was already so well supplied with necessaries of every kind, that only a small portion of the goods was required for their use; and the chief, after permitting every man to claim anything which might have belonged to himself or his relatives, ordered the remainder to be packed in bales of a convenient size, so that they might be either carried with them or concealed, as circumstances might render advisable.

The council was opened by War-Eagle, who desired the several parties, who had been out in different directions, to state the result of the search. This was done with the brief simplicity usually observed by Indians on such occasions. But nothing of importance was elicited; for of the trails which they had examined, none seemed to be that pursued by the Osages in their retreat. During the speech of one of the Delaware warriors, Wingenund, who had not before made his appearance, noiselessly entered the circle, and, taking his place by the side of Reginald, leaned in silence upon his rifle.

Baptiste, whose age and experience entitled him to speak, and who suspected that the chief had not been altogether unsuccessful in his search, addressed him thus: "Has War-Eagle no word for his warriors? Grande-Hâche and Netis have found the stolen goods: has the path of the thief been dark to the eyes of the chief?"

"The foot of War-Eagle has been on the Washashe trail," was the calm reply.

A murmur of satisfaction ran through the assembly, and Reginald could scarcely restrain the open expression of his impatient joy.

"The trail is fresh," continued the chief; "not more than two dews have fallen on the prints of foot and hoof."

"Did my brother see the footmarks of Olitipa and the Comanche girl?" inquired Reginald, hastily.

"He did not, but he saw the trail of Olitipa's horse; iron is on two of its feet."*

During this conversation, Wingenund more than once looked up in the face of his white brother, then cast his eyes again upon the ground without speaking. The expression of the youth's countenance did not escape the observation of War-Eagle, who thus addressed him: "Has the young warrior of the race of Tamenund seen nothing? He has been far over the Prairie; his step was the last to return to camp; his eyes are not shut; there are words in his breast; why are his lips silent?"

The youth modestly replied in a voice, the singularly musical tone of which charmed and surprised Ethelston, who had seldom heard him speak before, "Wingenund waited until warriors who have seen many summers, and travelled the warpath often, should have spoken. Wingenund has been on the Washashe trail."

At this announcement an exclamation of surprise was uttered by several of the bystanders, for all had seen that the direction whence the youth had returned to the camp was quite differ-

* It may well be supposed that the horses used by the Indians on the prairie are never shod. The palfrey of Olitipa had probably been procured from some Mexican rancho

ent from that which had been pursued by War-Eagle, and yet the latter had affirmed that he had been on the trail of the enemy. The chief himself was, indeed, surprised, but he knew the diffidence, as well as the acute sagacity of the young speaker; and although confident that he was not mistaken in his own judgment, he was not by any means disposed to overrule, without careful inquiry, that of his brother. The conversation between them was thus pursued:

"Were there horses on the trail found by Wingenund?"

"There were not."

"Were the men many in number?"

"Wingenund cannot surely say; the trail was old and beaten; buffalo had passed on it; of fresh marks he could not see many; more than four, not so many as ten."

"Let my brother point with his finger to the line of the trail."

The youth slowly turned, cast his eye upward at the sun, thence at the rocks overhanging the valley to the northward, and then pointed steadily in a north-easterly direction.

War-Eagle, well assured that his own observation had been correct, and that he had followed a trail leading towards the north-west, thus continued: "There are many nations and bands of Indians here; a false light may have shone on the path. How does my young brother know that the feet of the Washashe had trodden it?"

There was a natural dignity, without the slightest touch of vanity, in the manner of the youth, as he replied, "The Great Spirit has given eyes to Wingenund, and he has learned from War-Eagle to know the mocassin of a Washashe from that of a Dahcotah, a Pawnee, a Shawano, or a Maha."

After musing a moment, War-Eagle continued. "Did my brother find the foot of Olitipa and the Comanche girl on the path?"

"He could not find the mark of their feet, yet he believes they are on the path," was the unhesitating reply.

Reginald and Ethelston looked at the speaker with undisguised astonishment; and War-Eagle, although he could not believe but what the latter was mistaken, continued thus to question him: "My brother's speech is dark; if he could find no trail of the women, why does he think that they are on the path? Have the Washashe carried them?"

"Not so," replied Wingenund. "Twice the trail crossed a soft bank of sand, where water runs from the mountains in winter; there were the marks of two who had passed lately, their feet large as those of the warriors, the tread light as that of a woman or a young boy."

The chief was very reluctant to say or do aught that might give pain to his young brother, whose future success as war-leader of the Lenapé had ever been the object of his fondest hopes; but in the urgent business in which they were now engaged, he felt that all other considerations must be secondary to the recovery of Olitipa and revenge on Mahéga for the loss and disgrace inflicted on the Lenapé.

"My brother has eyes as sharp and feet as light as a panther," he said, in a kindly tone; "but a trail in this strange country may deceive a man who has been on the warpath for twenty summers. The trail followed by War-Eagle *goes through* that small valley between the hills," *pointing to the north-west.* "Attō was with him; *they knew the iron hoof of* Olitipa's horse; they found this scrap, torn from her dress by a bramble stretching across the path. Is my brother satisfied?"

As the chief spoke, he held up before the council a shred of a silk kerchief, such as none, certainly, except she whom they sought was likely to have worn in that region. Again a murmur of approbation ran through the assembly; and Reginald, vexed that his young favourite should have been subjected to such a disappointment, looked towards him, in order to see whether he bore it with equanimity.

The countenance of Wingenund underwent not any change, save that a quiet smile lurked in the corner of his mouth, as he replied, "My brother and Attō are both known on the warpath; their feet are swift, and no lies are found on their lips; it must be true that they have seen the hoof-print of Olitipa's horse; it is true that the piece of dress torn off by the bramble belonged to her. Very cunning are the Washashe wolves; they have tried to blind the eyes of the Lenapé; they have made two paths; let my brother follow that which he has found, and Wingenund the other; perhaps they join beyond the mountain."

"There is sense in what the lad proposes," said Baptiste, who had listened attentively hitherto, without speaking, and who remembered the acuteness shown by Wingenund near the banks of the Ohio. "If he is sure that he has been on the Washashe trail, 'tis like enough they have divided to throw us off the scent; they will come together again further north."

Again War-Eagle mused in silence for a few minutes; then abruptly turning towards Reginald, he inquired, "What is the thought of Netis?"

"I think," replied the latter, "that Wingenund would never have spoken as he has spoken were it not that he felt assured of all that he said. I would venture my life, and what is now far dearer to me than my life, on the truth of his words."

The youth looked gratefully at the speaker and a smile of gratified pride stole over his eloquent countenance.

"It is enough," said War-Eagle with dignity: "let Wingenund go upon his path; he shall not go alone. Which path does my brother Netis choose? he has heard all that has been said?"

Reginald was sorely puzzled: on one side was the sagacious experience of the chief, added to the strong evidence afforded by the shred of silk; on the other, the confident assurance of a youth, of whose diffidence and acuteness he had seen so many proofs. While he was still hesitating, he saw the eyes of the latter fixed upon him with an earnest, imploring expression, that decided him at once.

"I will go with my young brother," he said firmly; "Grande-Hache, Ethelston, and six men shall go with us; War-Eagle, with the rest of the party, shall go on the large Washashe trail that he has struck. Let the chief say how we shall meet beyond the mountain if either of the trails prove false."

"It is good," said War-Eagle; "Attō shall lead the warriors who go with my white brother, and before the third sun rises we will come together again and talk of what we have seen."

Having thus spoken, the chief waved his hand to intimate that the council was dissolved; and calling Wingenund and Attō aside, he gave them clear and rapid instructions as to the course to be pursued in case of the trails diver

ging to opposite quarters, and he established at the same time various signals, to be used in case of necessity.

Pierre and M. Perrot asked and obtained leave to join Reginald's party; most of the horses and all the spare baggage followed that of War-Eagle, who led them off through the defile in the mountains before alluded to, while Wingenund led the way to the trail which he had discovered, with the light springy step of an antelope, and an expression of bright confidence on his countenance, which communicated a similar feeling to those who might otherwise have been disinclined to trust themselves to the guidance of a youth on his first war-path.

While these things were passing in the allied camp, the Osage named Toweno, who had, it may be remembered, been sent forward by Mahéga to reconnoitre, returned on the following morning to his chief, bringing him intelligence that the fires seen at a distance were those of a numerous band of Upsarokas; he had crept near enough to recognise them as such by their dress, the trappings of their horses, and other indications not to be mistaken. On receiving this information, Mahéga revolved in his mind various plans for gaining the good will of his dangerous neighbours, and of securing their alliance as a protection against any further hostilities that might yet be attempted by those in pursuit of his trail. As he had often before profited by the shrewd advice of his follower, so did he invite him now to give his opinion as to the best course to be adopted; and in order that the discussion might not be overheard, he walked slowly with Toweno down a glade which led towards the Crow camp.

They had not proceeded far, when they saw a fine bison-cow coming directly towards them; from her languid and crippled movement, it was evident that she was wounded; while from her struggles to get forward, it was equally clear that she was pursued. The Osages lost not a moment in crouching below the cover of a thick bush; and scarcely had they done so when a mounted Indian appeared, urging his tired horse up the glade after the wounded cow. It happened that she fell, unable to proceed further, not many yards from the spot where Mahéga was concealed; and her pursuer slackening his pace, approached leisurely; and having shot another arrow into her side, dispatched her with the long knife which hung at his side.

He was a tall, fine-looking man, in the prime of life, with remarkably high cheek bones, an aquiline nose, and a mass of long hair gathered or clubbed at the back of his head; his hunting-shirt and leggins denoted by their ornaments a warrior of rank in his tribe, and his whole appearance and bearing were indicative of habitual authority.

The little steed which had borne him, and which in truth would have been termed among white men a pony, stood panting beside its master, whose weight seemed entirely disproportioned to its size and strength; and the Crow hunter now stooped over the bison-cow, examining her condition and her fat with the attention of a practised Indian gourmand.

Meanwhile, half a minute sufficed for Mahéga to explain his intentions in a whisper to his follower, and less than half a minute sufficed to carry them into execution. Rushing together upon the Crow while he was stooping with his back towards them, they seized and pinioned him before he had time to catch up his knife or to offer the least resistance. Never was there an attack more unexpected, nor a victory more easily obtained; and the discomfited Crow looked upon his two captors with an astonishment that he could not conceal. Their dress and tribe were altogether strange to him; and the scouts around the camp having brought in no report of any suspicious appearance or trail having been discovered, it could not be wondered at if he imagined that they must have pounced upon him from the clouds.

As soon as Mahéga had assured himself that the hands of the prisoner were securely tied, he led him towards a spot more sheltered from observation, Toweno following with the horse, and if the Crow felt at first any uneasiness respecting their intentions towards him, it must have been soon dispelled, as the Osage chief assured him, in the language of signs, that no harm was intended to him, and that he would soon be at liberty.

After a short consultation with Toweno, the chief determined to conduct the prisoner to his camp, on reaching which his arms were unbound, and he was courteously invited to take a seat by his captors. The Crow obeyed without any apparent reluctance, having satisfied himself by a hasty glance around that he was watched by several well-armed men, and that any attempt at escape or resistance, must be for the present hopeless of success.

The pipe of peace having been smoked between the Osage and his prisoner, some meat and cakes were placed before the latter, of which he partook without hesitation; but he could not resist casting sundry curious glances at the white tent, wondering what it might contain; he observed, also, the numerous packs and bales scattered around, and thought within himself that, whatever might be his own fate, many of these would, ere long, fall into the hands of his tribe.

As soon as he had finished his meal, Mahéga, resuming the conversation in the language of signs, explained to him that he wished to become friends with the Upsaroka; that he had come from very far with few followers, having fought with the Pale-Faces; that the tent was Great Medicine, and contained that which brought wealth and good things to friends, but terror and misfortunes to enemies.

It may be supposed that the Upsaroka did not, in his present circumstances, regret these peaceful overtures; on the contrary, he bound himself by the most solemn promises to do everything in his power towards establishing friendship between their respective tribes, and he gave Mahéga to understand, by his gestures, that he was not without authority among the Crows.*

* Among some of the North American tribes it is the custom for an Indian entering into a solemn obligation, to place his hand against the thigh of the party to whom he makes the promise; and this usage has in several instances been triumphantly quoted by those authors who have laboured to prove the descent of the North American Indians from the lost tribes of Israel. The origin and meaning of the custom, which is as ancient as the time of Abraham (Gen., xxiv., 2), are both involved in great obscurity; sundry explanations have been attempted by learned commentators of different ages and nations; the Jewish writings of the highest authority, such as the Targum of Jerusalem, and that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, derive it from the covenant of Circumcision, to which they maintain its symbolic analogy by arguments which it is unnecessary here to produce. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, leans to this view, but does not offer any conclusive reasoning in support of it. Bishop Patrick, following the learned Calmet, &c.

Upon receiving this assurance, the Osage chief suffered his prisoner to depart, restoring to him his horse, and presenting him with several trinkets in token of friendship.

The first use which the latter made of his recovered liberty, was to invite Mahéga to return with him to the Upsaroka village, an invitation which, to the surprise of his followers, he accepted without hesitation.

With a parting caution to Toweno to keep his men watchful and ready against a surprise, he threw a battle-robe* over his broad shoulders, and, armed with his rifle, tomahawk, and knife, accompanied his new ally towards the Crow village.

On approaching it he found that it consisted of more than a hundred lodges, containing, probably, two hundred men, besides women and children,

Great was their surprise when they saw the gigantic stranger advancing with his conductor towards the lodge of the principal chief, to whom he was nearly related.

The mien and bearing of the Osage, as he entered the lodge, were alone sufficient to secure for him a courteous invitation to sit in the place of honour, while the Crow who had been his prisoner briefly narrated to the head chief the circumstances under which the stranger visited his camp.

The pipe of friendship having been smoked in due form, the Crow chief whispered a few words in the ear of a youth beside him, who disappeared immediately, and the party sat in silence until he returned, accompanied by an individual whose appearance was singular in the extreme; his head was of an enormous size, and covered with black shaggy hair; his features were coarse and forbidding, nor was their expression improved by a patch of leather plastered over the cavity which had once been occupied by his left eye; his shoulders were broad, and his arms of unusual length, his stature was scarcely five feet, and his legs were bandy, with clumsy knees like those of a buffalo-bull; this unsightly ogre rejoiced in the name of Besharo-Kata, signifying in the Crow language, "the little bison," but he was commonly called "Besha," or the "Bison," the diminutive termination being omitted.

His origin was involved in a mystery that neither he nor any one else could satisfactorily explain, for he had been born in that wild region watered by the Arkansas, and his mother a Comanche woman, was said to have divided her favours, previous to the birth of Besha, between a half-breed trader to Santa Fé, and a runaway negro from one of the southern slave-states; she died while he was yet an infant, and as he had never been owned or claimed by either of his reputed fathers, it was a miracle that he ever lived to manhood.

In his early years, he hovered about the hunting parties of Osages, Comanches, Pani-picas, and other tribes, who frequented the region where he had been left to shift for himself, and at other seasons none knew whether he lived upon roots, berries, and honey, or wandered to tribes yet more remote from his birth-place. He was never known, either in summer or winter, to wear any other dress than a bison-skin with the hair outwards, in the centre of which he cut a hole, and passing his head through the aperture, wore this uncouth skin like the Poncha of the Mexicans. From these early rambling habits, he had picked up a smattering of many Indian dialects, and of these the Osage was one with which he was the most familiar; he enjoyed a high reputation among the Crows, not only from his being often useful as an interpreter, but because he was, without exception, the most skilful horse-stealer in the whole region between the Arkansas and the mountains. He was also deeply versed in the knowledge of all the properties of plants, roots, and herbs, so much so that, unless fame wronged him, more than one of his enemies had died by the agency of subtle poison. Such was the personage, who fixing his single cunning eye upon Mahéga, inquired, on the part of the Crows, his object in paying them a visit. The conversation, rendered into English, was in substance as follows:

Besha. "Has the Washashe come to hunt and trap among the Stony Mountains?"

Mahéga. "He has not; he has come towards the setting sun because the enemies on his path were too many for him—he wished for peace."

B. "Has the Washashe a name in his tribe?"

M. "He has a name; when the war-post is struck, Mahéga is not silent," said the chief, haughtily.

B. "Mahéga!" repeated the horse-stealer, to whom the name was evidently not unknown. "Mahéga, the Red-hand!—does he wander so far from his village?"

M. "He wanders, but there is Great Medicine in his lodge; blood has been on his path, and his enemies do not laugh."

B. "Who are the men with whom Mahéga has dug up the hatchet?"

M. "Pale-faces, and cowardly Red-skins, who are their friends."

When this reply was translated, a great sensation was visible among the Crows, several of whom whispered together. After receiving a few instructions from the Chief, Besha proceeded with his inquiry.

"Are the Pale-faces on the trail of Mahéga?"

M. "They are."

B. "How many?"

M. "Mahéga does not know.

B. "Is there a pale-faced warrior with them, young, and tall, riding a dark horse, very swift and strong?"

M. "There is." said the Osage, astonished in his turn at hearing Reginald thus accurately described by the interpreter.

Again there was a murmur and consultation among the Crows, after which Besha thus proceeded:

"What is the wish of Mahéga? the Upsaroka ears are open."

M. "He wishes to make friends with them, to join his strength to theirs, to drive these Pale-face thieves out of the Crow country. Mahéga's warriors are few, but they are not squaws; his hands are not empty; he has presents, for the chiefs, and he will not forget the interpreter." He added, sinking his voice almost to a whisper: "He has many things, enough to make the tribe rich, hid in a cave far to the south; if the Crow will be his brother, he shall find that Mahéga has an open hand."

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scribes this usage as an ancient sign of subjection and homage prevalent throughout the East; and Locke mentions it as being "practised by some Indians to this day."

* *It is a frequent custom among* the Missouri Indians to *sketch upon the interior of a bison-robe* the various battles *in which they have fought and conquered.*

The cunning chief was aware of the thieving propensities of the Upsaroka, and he purposely threw out this last hint that they might be induced to spare his baggage, in the hope of ultimately possessing themselves of the more important treasure in his "câche." Nor was his stratagem without effect, for the discovery and possession of the contents of that câche became forthwith the principal object of the Crow chief; and the readiest mode of attaining it was to make friends with the party who could alone guide him to it.

Fortune had in this instance been more propitious to Mahéga than he deserved, for, as the reader has probably conjectured, he had fallen in with that very Upsaroka band, a detachment of which had been so roughly handled a few days before by Reginald Brandon and the Delawares under his command.

The high contracting parties being thus united by the strong ties of avarice, and revenge against a common enemy, an offensive and defensive alliance was entered into immediately. Mahéga soon discovered the motive which impelled his new friends so strongly to espouse his cause, and was thereby satisfied that, for the present at least, he might trust them. Before nightfall, the white tent of Prairie-bird was pitched at the edge of the Upsaroka camp, and the Osages took up their quarters around it, so that none could leave or enter it unperceived by them.

Early on the following morning Mahgaé received a visit from the Crow chief, who, accompanied by Besha, came ostensibly to show him courtesy, but in reality to inspect his packages, horses, men, and equipments; and, if possible, to solve the mystery of the Great Medicine in the white tent. The Osage warriors, strong, weather-beaten men, every one provided with a rifle in addition to the usual arms of an Indian, had no reason to fear the scrutinizing eye of the Crow; indeed, the latter began already to calculate how he might best avail himself of their aid in an expedition which he meditated against his hereditary enemies, the Black-Feet.

After the pipe had been smoked, and food set before his guests, Mahéga desired one of the smaller packages to be opened, from which he selected a blanket, and spreading upon it various beads and trinkets, presented the whole, in token of friendship, to the Upsaroka chief, who seemed highly delighted with the gift.

His expressions of gratitude, conveyed through Besha, were unbounded. He did not, however, think it requisite to express, at the same time, his vehement desire to become the possessor of all the goods and chattels belonging to the Osage; neither did the latter forget to propitiate the interpreter, whom he presented with a knife, and ornamented sheath, both of which were graciously accepted.

The Crow was resolved not to leave the spot until he had solved the enigma of the mysterious tent; and finding that his guest still kept silence on the subject, he directed Besha to use his best exertions towards the gratification of his curiosity. An opportunity being afforded by the appearance of Lita, who went out to draw some water from the stream, the interpreter inquired whether that woman was the "Great Medicine," of which he had spoken.

Mahéga, who was desirous of impressing the Crows with a due respect for Prairie-bird, shook his head, repiying, "That is the slave of the Great Medicine."

Besha. "Is the Great Medicine a chief—a wise man?"

Mahéga. "No: it is in the form of a woman; but its power is very great. It talks with the Great Spirit, and the Wahconda* listens to its speech!"

Besha. "Many are the medicine-men who talk with the Great Spirit; they see dreams, and give counsel to the warriors and chiefs; there is no new Medicine here."

"My brother speaks truth," said the Osage smiling scornfully. "But if the medicine-men of the Upsaroka call to the sun, will he come out of his path, or hide his face at their words?"

Having thus spoken, Mahéga lowered his voice, as if afraid of being overheard by the mysterious tenant of the tent, and related to the wondering Besha the circumstances attending the late eclipse.

The interpreter having given the explanation to his chief, they looked at each other in speechless astonishment; for not only was there an air of truth in the statement of Mahéga, but the Crows having themselves observed the mystery of the darkened sun, were thereby led to listen with believing awe to the wonderful disclosure made by the Osage.

Perceiving his advantage, the latter again relapsed into silence, which was broken, after a few minutes, by the interpreter, who inquired, on the part of his chief, whether the Great Medicine of the tent would receive a present from him. To this the cautious Osage replied, that the daughter of the Unknown cared not for the things belonging to other women; but that her smile and her good words would bring prosperity to those with whom she dwelt, while her curse would ensure their destruction; on which account it would not do any harm if the Upsaroka were to offer a present to her Medicine.

The latter now finding that, during this visit at least, his curiosity would not be gratified by a sight of the mysterious dweller in the tent, arose and took a courteous leave of the Osage chief, who remained for some time ruminating abstractedly over his future plans, and the probability of their ultimate success.

Scarcely half an hour had elapsed ere Besha returned, accompanied by two young Indians, one of whom led a wild horse, which he presented on the part of his chief to Mahéga; and the other was the bearer of a large package of beaver-skins of the finest quality, which he laid down at the door of the tent, and retired, casting back uneasy glances, apparently relieved at having safely executed a commission fraught with danger.

Mahéga presented each of the youths with a handsome knife, and Besha with a mirror, wherein he contemplated his cyclopean countenance with undisguised satisfaction; so long, indeed, did he continue this admiring self-inspection, that the two young Crows left him engaged in it, and returned to their quarters.

They had not been long gone before the interpreter commenced a confidential conversation with the Osage chief, during which each endeavoured, with little success on either side, to overreach the other; at the same time, the conference was not without its satisfactory issue to both par-

* As the Great Spirit is designated by the Delawares, Chippeways, Sâkis, and other tribes on this side of the Mississippi by the name of "Manitté," or "Manitou," familiar to every reader of Transatlantic travel or romance, so is he known among the Osages, Omahaws, Ioways, and other Missouri tribes, by the designation of Wah-kon-da, or "Master of Life."

ties; for Mahéga ascertained that the Crows viewed the mixed band of Whites and Delawares with feelings as hostile as his own, and that they were as deeply impressed as he could desire with awe for the mysterious powers of Prarie-bird. On the other hand, Besha satisfied himself that his own services would be almost indispensable to the Osage, and that the latter was neither unwilling nor unable to reward them liberally; so that after a complimentary conversation of some length, these two rogues parted, with many expressions of mutual regard and esteem.

Scarcely was the interpreter out of sight, when Mahéga sprung from the ground to examine more closely the steed presented to him by the Crow chief. It was a strong, high-mettled bay colt, untamed, and almost untameable; if the truth must be told, the latter had given it to his guest because neither he nor any of his warriors could subdue its violent and vicious spirit, although the Crows are renowned among the Indian nations as bold and expert horsemen.

On whatever side Mahéga endeavoured to approach to mount it, the horse struck fiercely at him, using both hind and fore feet with equal rapidity; but the Osage, penetrating at once the motives of the Crow's liberality, smiled in disdain of the shallow trick, and, seizing his opportunity, threw himself upon the wild, unsaddled animal, despite of whose furious plunging and resistance, he sat unmoved like a centaur; and plying his whip and heel with unmitigated severity, compelled it to gallop at full speed over the prairie, until he thought fit to bring it back to the camp, wearied, breathless, and subdued. Then throwing the halter to one of his men, he quietly resumed his pipe, leaving the Crow chief and his people to draw their own conclusions from what they had seen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Containing various incidents that occurred to the party following the Trail.—Plots and Counterplots, and a discussion upon Oratory, which is very much out of place, and, fortunately for the reader, is not very long.

THERE is scarcely any position or occasion in life more gratifying to a young and generous spirit, than when it finds itself, for the first time, entrusted with a high responsibility. The elastic mind, far from succumbing under the unwonted burden, springs upward with increased vigour to resist its pressure; and the trials and difficulties which threaten to overwhelm it, only serve to call forth and multiply its energies. Such was the case with Wingenund, who now found himself, although not yet seventeen years of age, leading a gallant band on a trail,—a task which is at all times the greatest trial of an Indian warrior's skill; and, if successful, lays the foundation of his fame. The issue at stake was, in this instance, heightened by the importance of the object to be attained, and by the remarkable circumstance that he had ventured to differ from, and overrule, the opinion of his elder brother, the most sagacious warrior of the tribe.

Fully impressed with the serious responsibility that he had incurred, the youth set forth upon the trail with a gravity of demeanour which contrasted strongly with his almost boyish years. Yet, while his keen eye darted from point to point, suffering not a blade of grass to escape its scrutiny, his countenance wore a beaming look of confidence, that imparted its cheering influence to the whole party

For some hours he marched rapidly forward with the assured step of a man who was treading a familiar path. Attō followed at no great distance, next to whom, on the trail, came Reginald, with Ethelston, Baptiste, and the other Whites, the line being closed by the Delawares, who brought up the rear. It may easily be imagined that Reginald bent his eyes anxiously on the path; but although frequent traces were discernible of the passage of men, as well as of various animals, he could not discover the slightest indication of the marks for which he looked neither did the observation of the more experienced Baptiste meet with any better success.

When Wingenund reached the streamlet, on the sandy edge of which he had before noticed the light tread of a foot, which in spite of its dimension, he believed to be that of Prairie bird or her attendant, he halted the party, and summoned Attō to a close examination of the trail. Stooping over it, the Indian looked long and earnestly, after which he shook his head, as if dissatisfied, and muttering a few words, the meaning of which Baptiste was not near enough to catch. Wingenund made no reply, and crossing the brook, resumed the trail on its opposite bank.

"Does Attō find the mark of women's feet on the sand?" inquired Baptiste.

"He is not sure; bison have passed over the marks, and trodden them," was the evasive reply, and the party proceeded on the track.

Nothing of any importance occured for some time to enliven the tedium of the march. The sanguine hopes of Reginald had been checked by what had fallen from Attō, of whose acuteness he justly entertained a high opinion. Ethelston seemed buried in deep reflection; and even the comic sallies of Monsieur Perrot failed to excite any mirth in those to whom they were addressed.

"Ethelston, I fear that I acted imprudently," said his friend, in a low voice, "when I preferred the counsel of this youth to the more experienced opinion of War-Eagle; yet there was something in his manner that I could not resist."

"Doubtless," replied Ethelston, "the counsel of the elder warrior was entitled to the greater weight; and yet I do not think that he would himself have placed this detachment under the guidance of Wingenund, unless he felt sure that the latter had strong grounds for the tenacity with which he clung to his opinion."

"I would willingly peril my life on his truth and fidelity," said Reginald. "The question is, whether on this occasion he may not have been led into some error by the very eagerness of his wishes, and the ardour of his temperament."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when Wingenund stooped to pick up a small object which his quick eye had caught beside the rail, in another minute he placed it in the hand of Reginald, while a triumphant smile lit up his animated features. The object referred to was a slip of folded paper, damp with the dew which had fallen upon it. Reginald opened its folds, then gazed upon it in silence, with a fixed look, like one in a trace, while his powerful frame trembled from head to foot. The paroxysm of

excitement lasted only but for a moment, then putting the slip of paper into the hand of Ethelston, he threw himself into the arms of Wingenund; and, if a tear escaped him, it fell unseen upon the bosom which he pressed with grateful affection to his heart.

Meanwhile Ethelston made himself master of the secret which had produced an effect so sudden, as to cause the greatest astonishment in the whole party, now gathered round to ascertain what had happened. He had read on the slip the magical word "Follow," written in a distinct legible hand, and every doubt as to the Prairie-bird having passed along the trail vanished in an instant. This was no sooner made known to the hunters, and by Baptiste to the Delawares, than a shout of triumph from the whole party roused Reginald from the momentary weakness into which he had been betrayed.

"Follow thee!" he exclaimed aloud, holding the paper in his left hand, and grasping a rifle in his right; "Follow thee, dearest one! yes, over prairie and mountain, through valley and river, in cold or in heat, in hunger or thirst, there are those here who will never cease to follow thee, until thou art set free, and the injuries done to thyself and thy kindred dearly avenged!"

Again a shout of sympathetic enthusiasm broke from the party, as they caught the words of their leader, and read on his glowing countenance the intense ardour of feelings, too strong to be repressed.

What must have been, in the meantime, the sensations of the Delaware youth? The affectionate yearnings of his heart towards his adopted brother, his deep anxiety for his sister's fate, his future fame as the rising war-chief of his tribe, all these combined together to swell the triumph of the hour; yet there was not visible in his features the slightest appearance of gratified pride or vanity; and if his dark eye beamed with a brighter lustre, it was not so much with self-congratulation at what he had done, as with high aspirations for the glorious task before him.

Ethelston, who had watched him closely, was surprised at his calm, unmoved demeanour, and whispered to Baptiste, "Wingenund evinces little anxiety or emotion on this occasion; and yet this undoubted token which he has found on the trail must be a great triumph to him, after the doubts expressed by so many warriors of greater experience."

"It's partly the natur', and partly the trainin' of the boy," replied the Guide, leaning on his long rifle; the stronger his feelings the less will he show 'em to another man. I reckon this has been one of the proudest moments in his life, yet, as you say, he looks almost as if he'd nothin' to do with the matter; and he'd look the same if the Osages were pinchin' his flesh with hot tongs. Wingenund is three years older now than he was last month!"

"You are right, Baptiste," replied Ethelston; "it is not days, nor weeks, nor months, but rough trials, brave deeds, and deep feelings that make up the calendar of human life."

So saying, he sighed, and musingly resumed his place in the line of march, remembering in how short a space of time Nina's unrequited love had, while she was still younger than the lad of whom he was speaking, consigned her, wasted and heart-broken, to the grave.

Again Wingenund moved swiftly forward on the trail, and the whole party followed, their hopes excited, and their spirits raised by the occurrence above related. Reginald walked silently on, still clasping in his hand the magic token which had conjured up hopes and thoughts too deep for utterance. From time to time his lips unconsciously murmured "Follow!" and then the idea shot like fire through his brain, that all his power to obey the dear behest hung upon the sagacity of the youth who was now tracing the steps of an enemy, skilled in all the wiles of Indian warfare, and whose object it clearly was to baffle pursuit.

Before the close of day the watchful perseverance of Wingenund was again rewarded by finding another of the slips of paper dropped by Prairie-bird, which he brought, as before, to Reginald. The magic "Follow" again met his longing eyes; and as he announced it to the rest of the party, a joyful anticipation of success pervaded every breast.

After a brief consultation with Attō, Wingenund now resolved to halt for the night, as the increasing darkness rendered it impossible any longer to distinguish the trail with accuracy; so the horses were picketed, the succession of sentries arranged, and the party bivouacked under the shelter of two enormous pines, where the preparations for a substantial supper were soon completed, Monsieur Perrot taking charge of that destined for Reginald and Ethelston, while Bearskin and the other hunters prepared a meal for themselves and the Delawares apart. Wingenund was about to join the latter party; but at the earnest request of the two friends, he placed himself beside them, Baptiste being invited to sit down with them also.

It may be imagined that the conversation turned chiefly upon the all-engrossing subject of the pursuit in which they were engaged; and Ethelston was struck by the change which he observed in the demeanour of Wingenund; for the latter had now put off the gravity and somewhat haughty bearing of the aspiring warrior, and had resumed the playful and touching simplicity of manner that was natural to his years, and accorded equally well with the almost feminine delicacy of his features, and the soft melody of his voice. He took no pains to conceal the pleasure with which he received the warm and sincere encomium that Reginald passed upon the patience and sagacity that he had displayed in his arduous task.

"Netis owes me no thanks," he said, smiling "Love for my sister and revenge on the Washashees, who like cowards and false friends slew my kindred,—these lead me on the trail."

"It is not your eagerness, nor the strength of your motives that I call in question, dear Wingenund; but I am surprised that you are able to follow so slight a trail without being deceived by the tricks and devices of the Osage."

"The Black Father has often told me that among the southern men there are dogs who can follow the foot of a man by day or night, and will never leave the scent till they seize him. If an antelope is wounded, the wolf will hunt the track of her blood on the prairie till he finds her; if a bison is killed, turkey-buzzards many in number, fly from far to the carcase, though there is no trail in the air for them to

follow. Is it wonderful that the Great Spirit should bestow on the son of his ancient people a gift enjoyed by these beasts and fowls?"

"What you say is true," replied Reginald, "yet certainly we who live in settlements have not these faculties; at least we have them in a very inferior degree."

"The wise men of our nation have always said that the eyes and ears of white men are not good; but the Black Father says that their speech is not true, for that the Great Spirit has made the ears and eyes of red and white men alike, only the Pale-faces do not improve them as we do by use."

"Your Black Father may say what he likes," interposed Baptiste, "but I maintain that the ears of a white man are no more like the ears of a real Ingian than the paws of a bear are like the legs of an antelope. I remember, though it's now some twenty years ago, I was out on a hunt in the North with a Delaware comrade; he was called in the tribe 'The-man-who-hears-from-far;'—to say truth, I thought he often pretended to hear things that never happened, only just to keep up his name. We had walked all the morning, and having killed an elk, sat down to cook it on the prairie. All at once he held up his finger for me to keep silence; and turning his head to listen, his countenance changed and his ear pricked up like that of a scared doe. Nay, Master Reginald, you need not smile, for it's as true as a gun-barrel; and said I, 'What's the matter now?' He made no answer, but went a little way off; and lying down, put the side of his head to the ground. He soon returned, and told me that a 'big canoe was coming over the lake.' 'What,' said I, 'over that lake we passed this morning beyond those high woods?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'the same; I hear the paddles dip in the water.' I laughed in his face, and told him he was dreaming; for the lake was, maybe, two miles off; but he declared that he had heard the paddles as plain as he now heard my voice. I tried to listen, but could not hear a sound; however, I knew that if he was right, the canoe would be full of enemies, seein' that we had no particular friends then in the Dahcotah country, and I thought it better to believe him for once; so we put more sticks on the fire, to make as great a smoke as we could, and then ran off to the top of a hill, where a big pine-tree grew; and as it was about half way between the fire and the lake, we clomb in among its branches, where we could have a good look-out on both. We remained some time without hearing or seeing anything; and I began to conceive that my comrade had made a fool of me, as well as of himself, when we saw five or six Sioux devils peep out of the brush at the edge of the prairie, where they pointed to the smoke that rose from our fire, and began to creep cautiously towards it."

At this point the narrative of the Guide was unexpectedly interrupted by a sharp cry uttered by Monsieur Perrot, who jumped up from his seat, and capered like a harlequin, making at the same time the most doleful grimaces and ejaculations. Wingenund was the first to perceive and to explain to Reginald the cause of the unfortunate valet's distress, in doing which he *laughed with such* hearty inexpressible mirth, *that the tears started from his eyes.*

It appeared that Monsieur Perrot, in his anxiety to hear Baptiste's adventure, had unconsciously edged himself nearer and nearer to the fire, by the side of which was a small pile of dry burrs and prickly adhesive twigs; while sitting upon these, and listening intently to the narrative, they had become accidentally ignited, and not only burnt him as he sat, but adhered to his nether garments when he jumped up, where they continued to crackle and smoke in spite of the efforts which he made to disengage himself from them. To add to his terror, he remembered at this critical juncture that there was a powder-flask in the hinder pocket of his jacket; a circumstance which he communicated to his master with renewed exclamations, and unavailing attempts to rid himself of the dangerous magazine. On hearing this, Ethelston emptied a vessel full of water over a blanket that lay beside him, in which he immediately enveloped the alarmed valet, and by this ready application of one element freed him from the more serious danger to be apprehended from the other.

As soon as the gravity of the party was in some degree restored, Reginald requested the Guide to conclude the narrative which had been so unexpectedly interrupted, expressing at the same time his curiosity to learn how Baptiste and his comrade had extricated themselves from their unpleasant position among the branches of the pine-tree.

"Why, you see, Master Reginald, as soon as they were fairly busied in making their way to the fire which we had left burning, we slipped down the tree, and struck into the wood, where we had no difficulty in finding their back-trail to the lake, and creeping cautiously towards the shore, we found that the hot-headed fools had left no one to watch their canoe, which we spied under the boughs of an alder that hung over the leke; so we just stuck a piece of stick in the ground, with a Delaware mark on it to vex 'em on their return, when we paddled away to the other side; and having bored two holes in the canoe, and broken the paddles, we went on our way; and since that time I've always held my own opinion about an Indian's ears, and I'm not likely to change it now."

Whether the Guide's story was tedious, or that the fatigues of the day had produced their effects upon his hearers, certain it is, that soon after its conclusion both the ears and eyes of the greater portion were closed in sleep, and nothing having occurred during the night to alarm those who had watched, the whole party set forward as soon as daylight broke on the following morning.

Wingenund had no difficulty in making out the trail until he reached the banks of the river, in crossing which Mahéga had taken so much pains to mislead his pursuers. Here the youth halted, and informed Reginald that he might look for game during the remainder of the day, as it would be necessary for him and Attō to search for War-Eagle's party, and with them to find the right trail on the opposite bank.

The two Delawares started at a rapid pace to the westward, bestowing as they went careful attention to the various tracks of bison and other animals which had crossed at the different fords that they passed. After a toilsome march

a some hours, they fell in with War-Eagle's party, whom they found occupied in a like investigation. The chief learnt his young brother's success with undisguised pleasure; his nature was too noble to entertain a thought of jealousy; and one of the first wishes of his heart was to see Wingenund take his place among the first warriors of the tribe. He had ascertained beyond a doubt, that although the horses of the Osages had crossed the river opposite to the trail which he had been following, they had not travelled far in that direction, but had returned to the bed of the river for the obvious purpose of baffling pursuit; and the Delawares now crossed to the northern bank, and after minute examination of every path and track which led from it, they arrived in the evening at the point from whence Wingenund started, confident that the right trail must, if the Osages had crossed at all, be at some spot lower down the stream.

The whole party, now again reunited, encamped for the night, and related, over their evening meal, the indications and tracks which they had remarked on their respective lines of march. At the earliest dawn War-Eagle was again afoot, and after an hour's patient search, he struck a trail, which he pronounced without hesitation, to be that of the Osages. As it lead through a wooded and hilly region along the base of the Great Mountains, abounding in narrow and dangerous passes, every precaution was used against ambush or surprise; War-Eagle, Wingenund, and Attō leading the advance, with several of the most swift and skilful of their warriors, and the white men, who brought up the rear, being cautioned against straggling or falling behind the main body.

Another slip of paper found upon the trail, bearing Prairie-bird's inspiring watchword "Follow," raised the spirits of the party to the highest pitch. They halted at midday to refresh themselves and their horses for an hour, under the shade of some spreading cedars, above which rose a high conical peak, on the sides of which were scattered a few dwarf oaks and other timber of stunted growth. Obeying a signal from War-Eagle, Reginald climbed with him to the summit of this hill, whence they could command an extensive view of the sand hills and undulating ocean of prairie to the eastward, while above them to the westward towered the lofty and still distant mountain-tops, clad in their bright mantle of eternal snow.

But it was not to enjoy the splendour of this magnificent prospect that the Delaware had toiled up this steep ascent, or that he now cast his restless and searching eye towards the north and east horizon: he had another object in view. Neither did he seem to have altogether failed in its attainment, for after gazing long and intently upon a spot to the northward, his countenance brightened, and he desired Reginald, who was unable to distinguish so distant a speck with the naked eye, to examine it carefully with his telescope, for that he would see something there that would make his heart beat.

Reginald did so, and having succeeded in catching the indicated object with his glass, he exclaimed, "War-Eagle, my brother, you are right I can see them plainly, one—two—three—aye, twenty Indian lodges, and *the white tent* among them. Heaven be praised for all its mercies, we shall save her yet!"

For a few moments the chief was silent, then he said, "Let my brother use the glass again, and say how many lodges he can count."

"There seem to be very many," said Reginald, after a careful survey, "more than fifty but I cannot count them, for the tent is on a small hill, and some may be hid behind it."

"Mahéga smokes the pipe with a powerful tribe," said the Delaware, musing; and the two friends descended the hill, each contemplating according to the bent of their respective characters, the difficulties yet to be encountered, and the means by which those difficulties might be overcome.

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that Mahéga remained in idle security a resident in the Crow encampment; he appreciated too justly the skill and perseverance of War-Eagle to suppose that the latter would not strike and follow his trail, he therefore turned his attention to the strenthening of his alliance with his new friends by every means in his power. In this endeavour his own sagacity was admirably, though perhaps unconsciously, seconded by the winning manners and character of Prairie-bird, for the Crows, who had been prepared to look upon her with a feeling akin to dread, were agreeably surprised by her extreme beauty, and the gentleness of her demeanour.

The cunning Osage, knowing that she could only be drawn from the strict seclusion in which she lived by her never-failing willingness to alleviate suffering, had caused several children, and others afflicted with illness, to be brought to her, and she never declined giving them such remedies from her remaining stock of medicine as she thought most likely to afford relief. The general success of her simple pharmacy fully answered the expectations of Mahéga, in the increasing anxiety daily evinced by the Crows to guard and protect the "Great Medicine of the tent;" and thus, while obeying the dictates of her own gentle and humane feeling, the maiden little knew that she was strengthening the cords of her captivity.

Neither did Mahéga neglect to take every precaution against an attack or surprise on the part of War-Eagle and his party. Although ignorant of their precise force, he knew that they would in all probability be well armed, and was far from satisfied with the position of the present encampment occupied by the Crows.

After conversing once or twice with Besha, and the judicious admixture of a few presents to that *dis*interested personage, he learnt that there was at a distance of half a day's march to the northward a favourite strong hold of the Crows, to which they frequently resorted when attacked by an enemy too numerous to be resisted in the open plain, and it was represented to be in a neighbourhood affording abundance of game, and a plentiful supply of pasture for the horses.

Mahéga found it not a very difficult task to persuade the Crow chief to withdraw to this post, representing to him the formidable equipment of the Delawares aided by their white allies, and he urged him also to send a few of his best runners to hang about the trail by which he

had himself arrived, so that timely notice of the enemy's approach might be received.

The Crow acquiesced in both suggestions, and the united band moved off accordingly to the post above referred to, which they reached in the afternoon of the same day; it was a conical hill, covered on one side with low juniper bushes, and rising suddenly out of the prairie at a distance of several miles from the higher range of mountains to the west; a few hundred yards further to the east was another height of similar elevation, but of less circumference, and between these two lay a valley of extreme fertility, watered by a stream so cool and clear, that it bespoke at once the mountain source whence it flowed; the eastern side of this second hill was almost perpendicular, so as to be secure against any attack from that quarter: while an enemy approaching from the valley would be exposed to missiles shot from either height.

Mahéga saw at a glance the strength of the position, and proposed to the chief that he, with his Osages, should garrison the smaller height, leaving the larger hill and the intermediate valley to be occupied by the Crows.

This arrangement being agreed upon, the tent of Prairie-bird was pitched near the summit, on a spot where the ground gently sloped to the westward, and a few scattered oaks, cedars, and pines afforded not only a partial shelter from the rays of the sun, but a sufficient supply of fuel for cooking the venison and bison meat, which the hunters had brought in abundantly. Some twenty lodges of the Crows were placed upon the opposite and larger height; these consisted chiefly of the principal braves and warriors; the intermediate valley being occupied by the remainder of the band, and an ample space was left for picketing the horses at night between the two hills.

On arriving at her new quarters, Prairie-bird could not avoid being struck by the singularity, as well as by the beauty of the scenery. It was evident that the face of the sandstone rock, above which her tent was pitched, had been eaten away by the action of water and the elements; and she imagined that ere many years should pass, the precipitous cliff on its eastern front would partially fall in, and leave in its place a broken and turreted ruin, such as she had before noted and admired on the western borders of the great prairie. It was a great relief to her that she was so much by herself; for the lodge of Mahéga and his followers was pitched somewhat lower down the hill than her own tent, and she was yet further removed from the dirt and other annoyances of the Crow lodges. This was, indeed, a great luxury, as the quantity of bison-meat brought into the camp on the first day's hunt was so great, that the Upsaroka women were spreading and drying it in every direction: and as these ladies are not usually very particular in removing the offal, the odour thence arising in the valley below was not the sweetest that could be imagined.

Mahéga was in high good humour in consequence of the successful result of his arrangements; for he now occupied a post not only *well protected against the attack of an enemy, but where his baggage could not be purloined* by the light-fingered youths, who are so proverbially abundant among the Crows. But however secure he might feel, he did not relax his usual vigilance, in which he was zealously seconded by Toweno; and whenever the one was absent from the garrison, even for a short time, the other always remained at home on the watch. He renewed, also, a rude breastwork of unhewn logs, which had been thrown up by the Crows on some former occasion, and which afforded a shelter, from behind which he and his men could fire upon an approaching enemy without being themselves exposed.

They had not long been settled in their new quarters before the detachment which had been sent to reconnoitre returned to report that they had seen the united band of white men and Delawares, about thirty in number, advancing cautiously along the base of the hills towards the Upsaroka camp. The scouts had recognised Reginald as the person who had killed one of their principal warriors; and the announcement of his approach was received with a yell that showed how determinately the Crows were bent on revenge.

A war-council was immediately held, which Mahéga was summoned to attend; and although the wary Osage kept himself in the background, and showed no disposition to offer his advice until twice pressed by Besha to do so, it was soon evident that his spirit would rule the meeting, and that on him would devolve the conduct of the struggle in which they must soon expect to be engaged: such was the impression already made upon his new allies by his gigantic stature, and the air of command that accompanied his every word and gesture.

Unless the advantage of numbers was to be very great on his side, Mahéga did not augur favourably of the result of an open conflict between the Crows and the small but well-appointed force opposed to them. He formed a just estimate of the skill and sagacity of War-Eagle, and of the impetuous courage of Reginald Brandon. He hated both, especially the latter, with all the bitter intensity of which his nature was capable; and resolved that no stratagem should be left untried to heap upon them every species of suffering and disgrace.

With this view, he conferred long, through the medium of Besha, with the leading warriors of the Crows as to the nature of the ground in the neighbourhood of the enemy's line of march; being determined, if possible, to lead them into an ambush; or at least to attack them in some defile or pass, where the bow and arrow would be a better match for the rifle than in the open plain. Not being altogether satisfied with the replies which he received, he declined giving his opinion until he should have reconnoitred the district in person, and set forth without delay, accompanied by the dwarfish interpreter and two Crow warriors, all being mounted on swift horses.

Having reached the base of the first range of hills, the Crow who acted as guide struck into a narrow winding ravine; after following the course of which for some distance, the party emerged upon an elevated table-land, which they crossed at full speed, and found themselves at the base of a second range of hills, more broken and abrupt than the first. Here the

guide and Mahega dismounted, and having concealed the horses, and left them behind the projection of a rock in charge of the other two, they climbed with some difficulty to the brow of a sandstone cliff, whence they could command an extensive view of the region to the southward.

Creeping cautiously to the edge of the height, and screening themselves behind the junipers and scanty bushes growing there, they could easily distinguish the camp of the Delawares and white men in the valley below. The band had come to a halt, and were evidently engaged in refreshing themselves and their horses with their midday meal.

The Osage chief glared upon them like a tiger on his anticipated prey. He examined the ground in front and rear and flank of their position; he noted the breadth of the pass where the valley opened out upon the plain beyond, and questioned his guide closely as to the route which they would probably take in advancing towards the Crow encampment.

We will leave him for a time to pursue these investigations, while we return to Reginald and War-Eagle, whom we left deliberating as to the most advisable course to be pursued for the rescue of Prairie-bird.

The Delaware chief having been soon informed by his scouts of the enemy's retreat to another and a stronger position, lost no time in pushing forward his party to the point in the valley where it had (as above mentioned) been descried by Mahéga and his guide. Reginald and the other white men were at a loss to imagine why War-Eagle had selected for his halt a spot where a dense thicket on the side of each hill seemed to offer to an enemy, familiar with the country, a favourable opportunity for attacking him unawares; and even Baptiste, when questioned upon the subject, shook his head, saying, "Wait till to-morrow; we shall know by that time what hole the coon is making for."

As for the Delawares, they ate their bison-meat and smoked their pipe with as much indifference as if they were in the heart of their own hunting-ground, being confident in the skill of their leader, from the experience of many a foray and fight. The latter, having thrown forward two or three of his men as outposts, to guard against surprise, summoned Wingenund, to whom he gave, in an earnest voice, some minute directions, which did not reach the ears of others in the party; and the youth, as soon as he had received them, went up to Reginald, and said to him, "Will Netis lend Nekimi to Wingenund; he will be back before the moon is up,—and if he meets the Upsarokas, he must leave them behind."

Reginald testified his willing assent to the youth's request, and in a few minutes Nekimi was bounding over the prairie beneath his light burden with a speed that soon brought him to a point whence he could command a view of the two heights, upon and between which the Crows were encamped.

The sand-hills in that region project in many places from the base of the Great Mountains into the open plain, like the promontories of an indented shore into the ocean, and it was by skirting one of these until he reached its extremity that he continued to watch the encampment of the Crows without being observed by their scouts; for several hours he stood motionless by the side of Nekimi, under the shade of a pine, with that untiring patience which renders an Indian unequalled as a spy, when he saw four horsemen emerge from the camp, and gallop off towards the base of the mountains. As soon as they entered a valley where they were screened from his view, he put Nekimi to his speed, and by a shorter cut reached the head of the same valley before them, then leaving his horse behind a thicket of junipers, he crept forward, and hiding himself in some brushwood, waited for the passing of the horsemen.

As the roughness of the ground had compelled them to slacken their speed, he had no difficulty in recognizing Mahéga, but the features of the misshapen interpreter and the Crow warriors were, of course, strange to him. He watched the Osage chief and his companion as they climbed the hill, from the top of which they made their observations of the Delaware camp, and as they returned and remounted their horses, they passed so near to his hiding-place that the youth distinctly heard two or three words which Mahéga spoke to Besha in the Osage tongue. As soon as they were out of sight he hastened to the spot where he had left Nekimi, and returned at full speed to make his report to War-Eagle.

The chief had evidently been awaiting with some impatience the return of his messenger, and when he received the intelligence which the latter brought back, he said, "It is well, let Netis and the chiefs be called to council—there is no time to lose."

A few minutes sufficed to assemble the leaders, who were expected to take a part in the deliberations about to be entered upon, all of them being well aware of their vicinity to the enemy of whom they had so long been in pursuit; but when called upon to express their opinion as to the course to be adopted, a manifest reluctance prevailed, arising probably from the wild and rugged nature of the region, and from their ignorance of the strength of the band with which Mahéga had allied himself. After a brief pause, Baptiste, who was thoroughly versed in the character of the Delawares, arose and said, "Are the tongues of the warriors tied? the sun will not stay in his path, neither will the grass grow beneath the feet of the Washashee and Upsaroka; the white men and the Lenapé wait to hear the voice of the Great Chief—let War-Eagle speak."

Thus called upon, the Delaware leader came forward to address the council. He painted the wrongs that his tribe had suffered at the hands of the Osages, the treachery and cruelties practised on their wives and children; then he dwelt on the spoiling of their lodges, the abduction of Prairie-bird, and the attempted murder of Wingenund. Having thus roused the passions of his Delaware hearers, he gradually brought them back to a calmer state of reflection, by representing to them the dangers and difficulties of their present position, owing to the alliance formed by their implacable enemy with the Upsaroka, who knew every pass and dangerous defile of the country through which they were marching, and he impressed upon them the necessity of their having recourse to stratagem in

order to make up for their deficiency in numbers and in local knowledge. He then proceeded to unfold his plan of operations, which (as afterwards explained by Baptiste to Reginald and his friend) was nearly in the following words:

"Mahéga and the Upsaroka will attack our camp to-night—the wolf shall fall into a trap—they will come to take scalps, let them look after their own—but we must divide our party —Wingenund has seen the Washashee camp, he shall guide ten warriors to it in the dark, and while Mahéga is leading his blind followers here, the tomahawk and the fire shall be in his lodge!"

A deep murmur of approbation satisfied the chief as to the sentiments of his stern and determined band; and Ethelston, although he knew not the meaning of the words which had been uttered, was struck by the dignity with which they had been spoken, and by the rich and varied intonation of War-Eagle's voice.

"Reginald," said he, "how much I regret that I could not follow your Indian brother in his discourse. His attitudes brought to my mind the orators of old, as represented to us by classic pen and chisel: it seemed as if I could almost gather his meaning from his eloquence of eye and tone!"

"Certainly," replied Reginald, "whether the merit of oratory consists in action, as held by the 'old man eloquent who fulmined over Greece,' or in the art of persuasion, by convincing the judgment while moving the passions of the hearers, as held by the best authors who have since written on the subject, War-Eagle possesses it in an eminent degree."

"Yes," replied Ethelston, "I admit the persuasive power, and the action at once graceful and commanding, but I maintain that there is yet a stronger element, the mention of which you, and the authors whom you quote, have strangely neglected, namely, Truth; that immortal essence, which pervades the whole intelligent creation, before which falsehood shrinks abashed, and sophistry vanishes into vapour. This it is that guides the winged words of man direct to the heart of his brother: by this, and this alone, did the voice of Luther triumph over the thunders of the Vatican, and beneath its mighty influence the haughty Felix trembled before the captive apostle. This is, if I mistake not, the secret of your Indian friend's oratory; every word that he utters finds an echo in the breast of those whom he is addressing. The injuries that he recounts are recent; the dangers against which he warns them are real and present; and the vengeance to which he guides them, they pant for with a thirst ardent as his own."

"Far be it from me," replied Reginald, "to disparage the might and majesty of truth, or to doubt that in the end it must triumph over error and falsehood, as certainly as Good shall obtain the victory over Evil. Nevertheless, I hold, that as the object of eloquence frequently is to 'make the worse appear the better cause,' and to guide the hearers, not so much to their own real good as to the immediate purpose of the speaker, there are some occasions where he will more effectively attain it by working on their prejudices, frailties, and passions, than he could *by the most direct* appeal to justice or to truth. *If Felix trembled at the* denunciations of Paul, the bolder and mightier spirit of Wallenstein quailed before the wily astrologer, who pretended to have interwoven his destinies with the mysterious movements of the planets."

"I see the scope of your argument, Reginald, and acknowledge its force. It is because men obey the dictates of passion more willingly than those of conscience, that they are more easily led by the factious sophistry of a Cleon than by the virtuous wisdom of a Socrates. Nevertheless, you will not deny that even sophistry and faction bear testimony to the might of truth, by putting on her semblance, and disguising themselves as her followers: thus do they achieve success, until they encounter some champion strong enough to unmask and detect them; as the Trojans fled before Patroclus clad in the armour of Achilles, until Hector pierced his disguise, and killed him."

"Is it not strange," said Reginald, laughing, "that in this wild and remote region, and amidst its wandering tribes, we should renew discussions which we so often held together in early days on the banks of the Elbe and Rhine! I remember that you generally beat me in argument, and yet permitted me to retain possession of the field of battle. On this occasion I think we must draw off our forces, and neither claim the victory. The Indians are already preparing for the night's expedition, and interests so dear to me depend upon its result, that I look forward to it with the deepest anxiety. If War-Eagle is correct in his calculation, that the Osages and their allies will attack our camp to-night, it is uncertain whether they will carry Prairie-bird with them, or leave her behind under a guard. We must be prepared for either plan; and, in dividing our force, arrange it so that, if we succeed, she may be sure of falling into the hands of those fit and authorised to protect her. I will take with me Wingenund, and our steady friends Baptiste and Pierre: do you remain with War-Eagle, Paul Müller, and the main body reserved for the defence of the camp."

"Be it so," replied Ethelston; "I trust we shall not be long separated, and that before this hour to-morrow we shall have rescued your betrothed from her captors." He added, with a smile, "Remember that in our German expedition you made me many promises of discretion, which, in the excitement of action, you were somewhat apt to forget; you must not do so now that you are engaged in the cause of one to whom your life is perhaps dearer than it is to yourself."

"Baptiste himself shall not be more cautious than I will be," replied Reginald, grasping his friend's hand; and they parted to make the requisite preparations for their respective duties.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A scene in the tent of Prairie-bird, who gives some good advice, and receives in a short space of time more than one unexpected visitor.—The Crows, led by Mahéga, attack the Delaware camp by night.—The defeated party achieve a kind of triumph, and the victors meet with an unexpected loss.

THE evening passed away with the rapidity usual in that western region, where twilight has no sooner thrown its dusky hue over mountain

nd plain than it again yields its place to the larker gloom of night; and yet it were a libel upon nature to call by the name of gloom that uncertain light in which that mighty landscape reposed. The moon was half full, and her beams, scarcely piercing through the deep foliage of the wooded vale, streaked with silver lines its mossy herbage; eastward lay the vast expanse of undulating prairie, on which countless herds of bison lazily cropped the dew-sprinkled grass, while high above the scene towered the gigantic peaks of the Western Andes, slumbering in a light as cold and pale as their own eternal snow.

Nothing was heard to disturb the reign of silence, save the distant murmur of the streamlets as they plashed from rock to rock in their descent to the quiet river that flowed beneath; or here and there the stealthy foot of the panther or prowling bear. A few stars glimmered in the vault above, and clouds of ever-varying shape flitted athwart its surface, now hiding, and again partially revealing the dark outlines of forest, vale, and rugged cliff.

It was an hour and a scene calculated to inspire thoughts of awe, piety, and gratitude, towards the Creator; of love, gentleness, and peace towards his creatures; and yet through those groves and glens feet more stealthy than the panther's step, foes more fell than the prowling bear, now wound their silent way, bent on their secret errand of destruction and of blood.

In one quarter Reginald, followed by Baptiste, Pierre, and six men, moved swiftly across the prairie, under the guidance of Wingenund, towards the camp of the Osages; in another, Mahéga led a numerous band through the defiles before described, to surprise the encampment of the Delawares; while at the latter place War-Eagle, aided by Attō and his chosen warriors, was making all the necessary dispositions for a stratagem by which he hoped to defeat the expected attack of his enemies.

It was already several hours past midnight, the moon had withdrawn her light, and Prairie-bird was buried in the refreshing sleep that visits the eyelids of guileless youth; Lita slumbered on a couch of skins stretched across the entrance of her mistress's tent, before which, at a little distance, the Osage sentry, seated by the breastwork thrown up for the defence of the position, hummed a low and plaintive air of his tribe. Suddenly his ear caught the sound of approaching feet, and quick as thought the arrow was fitted to his bowstring, but he checked the hasty movement, remembering that sentries were posted at the base of the hill, who would not have permitted any hostile step to approach unchallenged. As the new comers drew near, he distinguished through the gloom the figures of a man and a woman—the former short and square-built, the latter slight and graceful.

"What do the strangers seek?" inquired Toweno; for he it was whom Mahéga had left in charge of his camp, and who now guarded the tent of Prairie-bird.

"Toweno is a great warrior among the Washashe; his voice is welcome to the ear of a friend," replied, in the Osage tongue, the rough voice of Besha, the horse-dealer. "The Upsaroka maiden wishes to speak with Olitipa, the Great Medicine of the tent."

"This is not a time for maidens to visit or to speak," replied Toweno; "the feet of the braves are on the night-path, and many wives who sleep now will be widows ere the sun is up."

"Besha knows it well," answered the horse-dealer; "nor can he understand how Toweno is in the camp while Mahéga and his warriors are on the bloody-path."

"The Pale-faces are cunning," replied the Osage, "and Mahéga would not leave the rich skins of otter, beaver, and bison, and the Great Medicine of the tent, without a guard."

"The Pale-faces will not come near the high-camp," said Besha, casting a rapid glance over the bales of fur and cloth. "Have you many warriors left with you?"

"Four of the Washashe, and four times four of the Upsaroka, is the band in camp;* but what does the woman desire of Olitipa?"

"She is the youngest and favourite wife of the Upsaroka chief," replied Besha, lowering his voice, "and she desires a medicine that his love for her may never change; her heart is good towards the Washashe, and her hands are not empty." Here he whispered a few words to his companion, and the girl, timidly extending her hand, placed in that of the Osage a small roll of tobacco.

The grim features of the warrior relaxed into a smile, as his fingers closed upon the scarce and much coveted leaf;† and, without further delay, he moved to the entrance of the tent, and waking Lita, desired her to arouse her mistress for a conference with the bride of the Upsaroka chief.

Although surprised at this unexpected summons, Prairie-bird hastened to receive her visitor, supposing that some sudden illness or accident must be the cause of her coming at such an hour. Her simple toilet was soon made; and fastening to her girdle the bag containing the slender stock of instruments and trifles that she always carried with her, she stepped into the outer compartment of the tent, and desired Lita to admit the stranger.

The Crow girl, led by Besha, came forward with apparent reluctance, obviously under the influence of the greatest terror; and Prairie-bird was, for the moment, annoyed at the admission into her tent of a man whom she had only seen once or twice before, and whose appearance was forbidding in the extreme; but quickly remembering that without him it would have been impossible to communicate with her visitor, she desired Lita to place three mats; and seating herself upon one, kindly took the Crow girl by the hand, drawing her gently to that nearest to herself; then motioning to Be-

* The various methods of counting adopted by the western tribes are curious in the extreme; some reckon chiefly by fives, and among these an expression equivalent to "hands and feet" signifies "twenty;" in one language the number eight is expressed by a word meaning six with two; in another, by a word signifying ten without two: in fact, some very interesting illustrations of their language and modes of thought might be drawn from an accurate investigation of their numerals, but they would be entirely out of place in a work of fiction.

† Tobacco is extremely scarce, and highly valued among the western tribes; at the close of the last century, it was probably unknown among the Crows, so that we must suppose that the horse-dealer produced this present from his own stores, and for purposes best known to himself.

sha to occupy the third, she requested him, in the Delaware tongue, to explain the object of this nightly visit.

"The tale of the Upsaroka maid is secret," he replied; "it is only for the ears of Olitipa."

At a signal from her mistress, Lita, throwing a blanket over her shoulder, stepped into the open air, and leaned against the breastwork not far from the post of Toweno.

"Does the 'Bending-willow' wish all to be told?" inquired Besha of his companion, in a whisper.

Bending-willow, who had not yet dared to lift her eyes from the ground, now timidly raised them; and encountering the kind and encouraging glance of Prairie-bird, answered, "Let all be told."

Having received this permission, the one-eyed horse-dealer proceeded to relate, with more feeling than could have been expected from his harsh and uncouth appearance, the story of his fair companion. She was the daughter of the principal brave in the nation; both he and his only son had fallen lately in a bloody engagement with the Black-feet. The father had, with his dying breath, bequeathed his surviving child to the protection of his chief, and the latter had fulfilled the trust by giving her in marriage to his eldest son, a gallant youth, who, although not yet twenty-five years of age, had already two wives in his lodge, and had taken many scalps from the Black-feet, against whom he was now absent on an expedition undertaken to avenge the slain relations of his newly espoused bride.

Bending-willow, who had not yet seen eighteen summers, was passionately fond of her young lord, who now returned her affection with an ardour equal to her own; this had moved the spite and jealousy of his two former wives, who took no pains to conceal their hatred of her; and although they dared not strike or ill-treat her as long as she remained the favourite, they endeavoured by every means in their power to vex and annoy her, and to bring her, by degrees, under the suspicion and distrust of their husband.

It was to obtain from Prairie-bird a medicine by which she might secure his continued affection, that Bending-willow had made this visit; and she had come stealthily by night, in hopes of escaping thereby the observation of her watchful colleagues.

During the horse-dealer's recital, Prairie-bird glanced more than once at the young woman's countenance, of which she was enabled by the red light of the wormwood torch that burnt near the centre of the tent, to distinguish the features and expression; both were remarkably pleasing and attractive, while the long black hair falling over her shoulders in two plaits, interwoven with beads of various colours, was set off by the delicate hue of the fawn-skin dress, which displayed to advantage the symmetry of her light and graceful figure. Prairie-bird took her hand in silence, and the Crow girl fixed her eyes with guileless and admiring wonder upon the surpassing loveliness of the "great medicine of the tent," which struck her the more forcibly, as she had come in the expectation of seeing a person decked out and ornamented after the fantastic fashion adopted among the Indian tribes by those who pretend to supernatural powers.

After a brief silence, Prairie-bird, addressing her visitor through the interpreter, said, "When the wives of the young chief scold and speak bad words to Bending-willow, what does she reply?"

"She gives them bad words again, sharper and harder than their own," answered the bride hastily.

Prairie-bird shook her head and continued, "Has Bending-willow watched their faces when they scold and heap angry words upon her? How do they look then?"

"They look ugly and spiteful as spotted snakes!"

"Bending-willow has come for a medicine to make the love of her husband endure fresh and green as the valleys watered by the Nebraska! Does she think he would love her if, when he returns to his lodge, he hears sharp, angry tones in her voice, and sees spiteful looks in her countenance? The Great Spirit has made her face and voice sweet as the breath of the morning; if she makes them ugly and harsh, the medicine of Olitipa cannot preserve her husband's love."

The Crow bride cast down her eyes, evidently confused and puzzled by this address. At length she inquired, in a subdued tone, "What, then, is the counsel of Olitipa? What is Bending-willow to do when these sharp tongues scold and rail at her?"

Prairie-bird opened the volume that lay beside her, and answered, "The words of the Great Spirit are, 'A soft answer turneth away anger!' When the tongues of the women are bitter against Bending-willow, let her give gentle words in reply; they will be ashamed, and will soon be silent."

"But," said the quick-tempered bride, "the angry spirit gets into the heart of Bending-willow: when fire is in the breast, cool water flows not from the tongue!"

"Olitipa will give a medicine to her sister," replied our heroine; and opening a case that stood near her, she drew thence a small hand-mirror. Presenting this to her visitor, she added, "When Bending-willow finds the angry spirit in her heart, and bitter words ready on her tongue, let her look at her face in this medicine-glass, and say to herself, 'Are these the soft eyes that the chief loves to look upon?'"

The bride took the glass, and contemplated her features therein, apparently not without satisfaction. But their expression was troubled, for she was frightened at the words which Prairie-bird had told her were those of the Great Spirit, and her eyes wandered from the book to the maiden, as if she would willingly learn more of her mysterious communion with the powers above.

At this crisis the wild war-cry of the Crows rang through the tent; several shots followed each other in rapid succession, mingled with the whistling of arrows, and the clash of blows, while loud above the din of the conflict rose the voice of Toweno, urging and encouraging his men.

Besha started to his feet, and rushed from the tent to learn whence came this sudden and unexpected attack, and Lita hastened to the

de of her mistress, as if resolved to share her ate, whatever that might be.

Louder and nearer came the mingled cries and yells of battle, and a stray rifle-ball pierced the canvass of the tent, leaving a rent in it close to the head of Prairie-bird. She neither stirred nor spoke; and as the wailing and terrified Bending-willow, the daughter and the bride of warriors inured to scenes of blood, looked on the pale, calm cheek of the Christian maiden, whose hand still rested on the mysterious volume, she felt as if in the presence of a superior being, and crept closer to her side for protection and security.

But we must leave the tent and its inmates, and turn to the scene of strife without. The darkness of night was giving place to the gray hue of dawn, and a faint streak of light was already discernible in the eastern horizon, ere Reginald's party, guided by Wingenund, was able to reach the base of the hill on which the Osages were posted. His intention had been to arrive there several hours sooner; but he had been prevented by various obstacles, such as might be expected to occur on a night-march through so rugged and difficult a country, and also by the necessity of making a considerable circuit to avoid being seen by the Crows encamped, as was before mentioned, on a hill on the opposite side of the valley.

Reginald had no means of ascertaining the force that might be left to guard the camp and the tent, and it appeared rash in the extreme to attempt by daylight the storming, with only ten men, a position so fortified by nature, and defended by warriors familiar with its local advantages. But his impetuous ardour had communicated itself to all his party, and it was unanimously agreed that the attack should be made.

In the sketch before given of the Osage camp, it was stated that the hill was steep, and of a conical shape, sloping less abruptly towards the valley, while the front that it presented to the prairie eastward was precipitous and inaccessible. The attacking party had made their approach from this quarter, rightly conjecturing that it would be left unguarded. They succeeded in gaining the base of the cliff unperceived; but in spite of the caution with which they advanced towards the more sloping face of the hill, they were descried by the enemy's outposts, who discharged at them a flight of arrows, uttering at the same time the shrill war-cry, that had startled the party within the tent.

There being now light sufficient to enable the combatants to distinguish each other, the rifles of the white men told with fatal effect, and several of the Crows fell at their first fire; the remainder retreated, fighting, towards the breastwork above, whither Reginald's party pursued them with an impetuosity not to be resisted. When, however, the Crows gained the protection of the breastwork, they recovered from their temporary panic; and animated by the example of Toweno, and the few Osages with him, let fly their arrows with precision and effect.

The leader of the Osages, and one of his band, were provided with rifles, and although the attacking party availed themselves of the shelter of trees and bushes in their ascent, two of them received severe bullet-wounds from the marksmen securely posted above. They were not unnoticed by the quick eye of Baptiste, who, having reloaded his long rifle, deliberately waited until the Osage beside Toweno showed the upper part of his head above the breastwork as he aimed at Reginald, now within pistol-shot of him. The finger of the savage was on the trigger, when a ball from the rifle of the Guide struck him in the centre of the forehead, and with a convulsive bound he fell dead on the spot, overthrowing in his fall Toweno, whose rifle was thereby for the moment rendered unserviceable.

"Forward! Master Reginald," shouted the Guide; "Wingenund is already at the breastwork!"

Ligh as an antelope, and active as a mountain cat, the Delaware youth had distanced all his companions in the ascent; and regardless of the fearful odds of numbers opposed to him, was already clambering over the stockade, when an arrow pierced his arm, and a war-club, hurled with equal force and precision, struck him on the head, and he fell backwards at the feet of Reginald. The latter, rendered desperate by the fall of his Indian brother, caught from Baptiste the huge axe that hung at his belt, and springing forward to the stockade, soon hewed himself a passage through its wooden barrier—wounded slightly by an arrow in his thigh, grazed by another on the cheek, his hunting-cap pierced and carried from his head, it seemed as though his life were charmed against the missiles of the enemy—and despite every obstacle, he stood at length within the breastwork, followed by Baptiste and his brave companions. The Guide, whose cool and wary eye noted every movement, had reserved the fire of the pistols in his belt, and twice, while his young master was hewing with reckless daring at the tough barrier, had an unerring ball from *them* rendered powerless an arm raised for his destruction.

Although still superior in numbers in the proportion of two to one, the allied band of Osages and Crows were so discouraged by the storming of their barrier, that they offered but a feeble resistance, each endeavouring to provide for his own safety. Toweno alone, aided by one of the bravest warriors of his band, determined in this fatal crisis to execute the bloody orders of Mahéga; and by a preconcerted signal, as soon as Reginald made good his footing within the breastwork, they rushed into the tent of Prairie-bird.

From the beginning of the affray, the terrified Upsaroka bride had never moved from the side of our heroine, on whose countenance she fixed her anxious eyes, as if expecting from her some display of supernatural power for their common protection. Lita clung also to the arm of her mistress; and the Christian maiden, trusting to that Word on which her hand and her heart alike reposed, awaited with patient resignation the issue of a peril, of which she knew neither the nature nor the extent. That the camp was attacked she was well aware, by the shouts and cries of the combatants; but who the attacking party might be, and whether likely to fail or to succeed, she had no means of judging.

Besha had in the commencement of the affray shot several arrows from the breastwork at the invaders; but seeing them press forward with such determined resolution, he bethought himself of the bride, for whose safety he was responsible, and retired within the tent, resolved, if possible, to withdraw her from the scene of confusion while there might yet be time for escape; but Bending-willow obstinately refused to quit the side of Prairie-bird, and he was still urging his entreaties to that effect, when the two Osages burst into the tent.

"Let the Medicine-woman of the Bad Spirit die," shouted Toweno, as he raised his tomahawk to strike; but Besha caught the descending blow, and endeavoured to avert the murderous weapon from his hold. Meanwhile the other Osage advanced to execute the fell purpose of his leader, when the devoted Lita, throwing herself in his way, clung to his upraised arm with the strength of despair. Slight, however, was the resistance which she could offer; and the savage, throwing her with violence to the ground, again raised his knife above the head of his unresisting victim. Lita shrieked aloud, and the fate of Prairie-bird seemed inevitable, when a warlike figure burst into the tent, and Reginald Brandon, still wielding the axe of Baptiste, stood in the midst of the group. His fiery glance fell upon the savage about to strike his beloved, and swift as thought that terrible weapon descending, clove the Indian's skull.

By this time Toweno had freed himself from Besha, whom he had rendered almost helpless by two severe wounds with his scalp-knife, and he now flew at Reginald with the fury of a tiger at bay; but the presence of Prairie-bird nerved her over's arm with threefold strength, and parrying the blow which his opponent aimed at his throat, he passed his cutlass through the body of the Osage, and threw him, bleeding and mortally wounded, several yards from the tent. At this moment a shout of triumph without, raised by Baptiste and his companions, assured Reginald that the victory was complete, and that those of the enemy who survived had fled and left him in possession of the camp. Then he cast himself on his knees by the side of his betrothed, and as she leaned her head upon his shoulder, a flood of tears relieved the suppressed emotions caused by the fearful trial that she had undergone. Few and broken were the words that passed between them, yet in those few words what volumes of the heart's grateful and affectionate language were expressed!

The entrance of Baptiste recalled to the recollection of Reginald the duties that still remained for him to perform, while the wounds received by Besha in her defence, pleaded with the maiden for such remedies as she had within her power. After briefly explaining to her lover the circumstances which had brought the horse-dealer and his still trembling companion to her tent, she sought her stock of healing ointments and salves; while Reginald, although slightly wounded, went out to arrange with Baptiste and Pierre for the defence of their newly-acquired possession, and to ascertain the loss which his party had sustained. This last *was less than he had feared it* might prove; and *it was with heartfelt pleasure* that he shook by the hand young Wingenund, who had recovered from the stunning effects of the blow which he had received in his gallant attack upon the breastwork.

"Let my young brother go into the tent," said Reginald; rest will do him good, and the eyes of Olitipa will be glad to see him."

As the youth turned away, Baptiste added, "Let not the man nor the Crow woman escape: we may want them yet."

Wingenund replied by a sign of intelligence, and entered the compartment of the tent where he found his sister exercising her office of charity.

We will now leave Reginald Brandon and his party busily employed in repairing the breach made in the breastwork, in examining and strengthening all the defences of the post (which they found much stronger than they had expected), and in making all the requisite preparations for the attack which they anticipated on the return of Mahéga and his Crow allies. The booty, ammunition, and supplies found in the camp, exceeded their expectations, as in searching the Osage lodges they discovered all the goods stolen by the latter from the Delawares. The eyes of Baptiste and Pierre brightened at the sight of this recovered treasure; those experienced hunters well knowing that the Osage chief, when deprived of the means of offering presents or bribes, would not long retain the friendship of his treacherous allies.

We will now go back for a few hours, and see with what success he met in the expedition which he undertook against the camp of War-Eagle. So confident did he feel in its issue that he had prevailed upon two-thirds of the fighting men of the Crows to join his party, promising them abundance of scalps and plunder, as well as revenge for the losses which they had sustained at the hands of Reginald's band. Having already carefully noted all the land-marks on the path by which he meant to make his approach, he followed it with instinctive sagacity, and a few hours' rapid night-march along the base of the hills brought him to the opening of the narrow valley, at the upper extremity of which the enemy's camp was posted. Here they slackened their speed, and advanced in silence with noiseless step, Mahéga stealing onward in front, darting his quick glance from side to side, as if he would penetrate the gloom, rendered yet deeper by the trees and rocks, beneath which they wound their cautious way. It was not long before he was enabled to distinguish the site of the Delaware camp, by the ruddy glare cast by the watch-fires on the surrounding foliage. The Osage stopped and pointed out the welcome beacon to his followers—not a word was spoken—every warrior there knew the preconcerted plan of attack, and was aware that a careless step upon a dry stick might discover and defeat it. Mahéga carried a rifle, and the discharge of it was to be immediately followed by a flight of arrows from his party, after which they were to rush on the surprised foe, with battle-axe and tomahawk. Onward moved the dusky band; and it seemed as if fate had given the enemy into their power. Not a deer nor mountain-cat was startled from its lair to give warning of their approach; and at length Mahéga succeeded in creeping to the

bushy summit of a hillock, whence, at a distance of less than fifty yards, he commanded a view of the camp below.

"For once, have the cunning and watchfulness of War-Eagle failed him," said the triumphant Osage to himself, as he loosened the thong of his war-club, and thrust forward the barrel of his rifle.

One by one of his followers crept forward, until they lay in line beside him, behind the crest of the hillock, over which their eager eyes looked down with savage anticipation upon the Delaware camp. The moon had entirely withdrawn her light, and all the scene was wrapt in impenetrable gloom, save where the camp-fires cast a red glare on the bark and branches of the surrounding trees, and on the figures which lay around, enveloped in blanket or in bison-robe; no sound disturbed the deep silence of the night, except the nibbling bite of the horses as they cropped the cool grass of the valley below the camp. For a minute Mahéga contemplated, with fierce delight, the helpless condition of his hated foes, then taking deliberate aim at a blanketed form supported against the tree nearest to the fires, he pulled the fatal trigger, and without waiting to see the effect of his shot, he shouted his battle-cry, and sprang forward with his war-club towards the camp. Scarcely had the bullet left his rifle ere the Crows discharged their arrows, each aiming at the figure that he could the most easily distinguish; then they rushed forward to complete the work of destruction with knife and tomahawk.

Leaping into the camp, fifty of the savages were already in the full glare of its fires, when a shrill whistle was heard, and the simultaneous report of a dozen rifles echoed through mountain, forest, and valley. So near were the marksmen, and so true their aim, that not a bullet failed to carry a death or fatal wound; and the surviving Crows now first ascertained that the figures which they had been piercing were stuffed with grass, and wrapped in blankets or robes, so as to resemble sleeping warriors! Great was their terror and dismay; they knew neither the number nor position of their concealed foe, and the master-spirit who had led them, and to whose guidance they trusted for their extrication, was nowhere to be seen. Such had been the impetuous haste of the Osage to satisfy his desire for vengeance, that [illegible] rapid descent upon the enemy's camp he [illegible]ught his foot in a tough and tangled ground-[illegible]er, and had fallen headlong forwards. It happened [illegible] the very spot where he fell was the post of one of the concealed Delawares, who grappled with him before he could rise to continue his course.

Though taken thus by surprise and at disadvantage the fierce Osage lost not for a moment his courage or self-possession; seizing the upraised arm of his antagonist, he wrenched the knife from his grasp, and, swift as thought, drove it into the heart of his foe; then tearing off the scalp, and suspending it to his belt, he looked upon the scene of confusion and slaughter below. A glance sufficed to show him that he had fallen into the trap that he had prepared for others, and that a continued contest with an enemy armed with rifles, and securely hidden, must be attended with great and unavailing loss. His own person had not yet come within the light of the fires, neither had the groans of the dying Delaware been heard amid the yells of the Crow attack, and the succeeding report of the guns; thus was the Osage enabled to retire unobserved a score of paces into the wood, bearing with him the yet undischarged rifle of the Delaware whom he had slain; then he applied his war-whistle* to his lips, and blew a loud and shrill recal.

Glad were his faithful followers and the terrified Crows to hear and obey the signal; yet did they not leave the scene without further loss, for ere they got beyond the circle around which the camp-fires shed their uncertain light, another volley was fired after them by the enemy, and although none were killed by this second discharge, many were so grievously wounded that they were with difficulty borne off by their companions. It was some relief to them in their hasty retreat to find that they were not pursued. Mahéga placed himself in the rear; he even lingered many yards behind the rest, crouching now and then behind tree or bush in hopes of being able to slake his burning thirst for revenge; but in vain, War-Eagle was too sagacious to pursue by night, in an unknown and broken country, an enemy who, although dismayed and panic-struck, still out-numbered his band in the proportion of three to one.

"Bloody-hand, the great warrior of the Osages, will not come again soon to visit the Lenape camp," said War-Eagle, in answer to Ethelston's congratulations, as they stood surrounded by their victorious handful of men on the spot whence they had just driven the enemy with so much slaughter. "Let Attō count the dead," continued the chief, "and bring in the wounded if any are found."

"War-Eagle," said the Missionary, who from his concealment had been an unwilling spectator of the late brief, but sanguinary skirmish, "forbear to exercise here the cruel usages of Indian war; let the wounded be cared for, and the dead be put to rest in peace below the earth."

"The ears of War-Eagle are open to the Black Father's words," replied the chief sternly; "if any wounded are found, they shall suffer no further hurt: but the scalps of the dead shall hang on the medicine-pole of the Lenape village, that the spirits of Tamenund and his fathers may know that their children have taken vengeance on the fork-tongued Washashe."

Further conversation was interrupted by a cry uttered by Attō, who had found the body of the unhappy De[illegible]are slain by Mahéga. The whole party hastened to the spot, and War-Eagle, without speaking a word, pointed to the reeking skull whence the fierce Osage had torn the scalp.

Paul Müller, feeling that all reply would be ill-timed and unavailing, turned away, and walked towards the feeding-place of the horses,

* Some of the Indian warriors who lead a war party carry a shrill whistle, wherewith they direct the movements of their followers. These whistles vary as to their form and ornament according to the tribe to which the leader belongs. Those which the Author has seen in most frequent use were made from the bone of the wild turkey's leg, and were fancifully adorned with stained porcupine-quills.

while the Delawares scalped, and threw into an adjacent hollow, the bodies of the Crows and Osages who had fallen. Of the latter they counted two, and of the former ten, besides a much greater number whom they knew to have been borne off mortally wounded.

As the Missionary strolled onward, accompanied by Ethelston, a low moan caught his ear, and stooping down, he discerned an Indian coiled up in a position indicative of intense agony under the branches of a juniper. They carried him back to the camp-fire, and on examining him by its light, he proved to be a young Crow warrior, shot through the body, who had dragged himself with difficulty for some distance, and had then fallen exhausted to the ground. Doubtless he expected to be immediately scalped and dispatched, nor could he for some time be induced to believe that those into whose hands he had fallen were indeed endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings.

War-Eagle, faithful to his promise, rendered every assistance in his power to the worthy Missionary while thus employed, but it might easily be seen by the scornful curl of his lip that he looked upon this care of an enemy wounded in battle as an absurd and effeminate practice.

Day broke, and the dispirited band of Crow and Osage warriors returned from their fruitless expedition, only to find a worse disaster at home. Great, indeed, was their dismay, when they were met by a scout from their village, who informed them that a party of white men had stormed the Osage camp by night, and still retained possession of it, having destroyed the greater proportion of those left to defend it. In this description of the attack, the height, the strength, the daring and impetuous courage of the young warrior who had led it, were painted in colours exaggerated by terror; yet the Osage chief had no difficulty in recognizing the hated rival who had struck and disgraced him, and who was now master of the fate of her for whose sake he had toiled, and plotted, and suffered so much.

Stung to the quick by these suggestions of wounded jealousy and pride, he ground his teeth with fury that would not be repressed, and he swore that before two suns had risen and set, either he or his rival, or both, should see the light of day no more. His position was now precarious in the extreme, all his goods and ammunition having fallen into the enemy's hands excepting that which he and his few remaining followers had about their persons. He knew that if he no longer possessed the means of making presents, the Crows would abandon, if not betray him at once, and he resolved to strike some sudden and decisive blow before that thought should obtain possession of their minds.

This resolve imparted again to his manner its usual fierce and haughty grandeur, and, although the Crows loved him not, they could not help looking with a certain awe upon the man who, amid the confusion and panic of the late disastrous attack on the Delaware camp, had borne away from the victorious enemy the bloody trophy which now hung at his belt, and who, although he had lost by a single blow his lodges, *his supplies*, and the Great Medicine of the tent, *reserved unsubdued the* commanding pride of *his demeanour.*

The success of the stratagem which he now meditated will appear in due season; meanwhile we must return to the camp of War-Eagle, who began his march at dawn of day with the view of rejoining Reginald and his band with the least possible delay.

Although he did not anticipate any attempt at reprisals on the part of the Crows to whom he had just given so severe a lesson, yet he was aware of Mahéga's having escaped, and well knew that he would leave untried no schemes for obtaining revenge.

On this account the Delaware chief went forward to the front, taking with him several of his warriors, whom he sent out from time to time to examine the ground, and leaving Attō with with Ethelston and Paul Müller to bring up the rear. The latter could not be prevailed upon to abandon the wounded Crow, whom he had placed upon his own horse, which he led by the bridle, while Ethelston supported the sufferer in the saddle.

Ever since the occasion when Reginald Brandon had presented to Attō the bear-claw collar as a testimony to his bravery, the Delaware had attached himself more and more to the white men; and although, with the instinctive sagacity of his race, he foresaw that the best exertions of the two now in his company would fail to effect a cure of the wounded man, he willingly and good-humouredly assisted their charitable endeavours.

In this order they had marched for some hours, and the leaders of the band having attained the summit of a ridge, already saw at no great distance the two remarkable hills before mentioned as the favourite encampment of the Crows. Encouraged by the sight, they descended the opposite slope, with increased speed, War-Eagle being most anxious to learn the success of Reginald's detachment. The whole band had passed over the summit of the ridge excepting the small party who escorted the wounded Crow when the latter grew so faint from the effects of internal bleeding that they were no longer able to keep him in the saddle, and deposited him gently on the grass. The poor fellow pointed to his parched lips, and made an imploring sign for water. Paul Müller casting his eyes around, saw at a small distance a broken ravine or fissure, in which he hoped that some rain-water might be found, and he desired Attō to hasten thither with all speed.

The Delaware obeyed, and had advanced within a few paces of its edge, when an arrow from an unseen enemy pierced through the breast, and Mahéga, leaping from his concealment, killed the brave fellow with his club, and attached another Lenape scalp to his belt. He was followed by eight or ten well-armed Crow warriors, who, passing him while he stooped over his fallen enemy hastened forward and surrounded Paul Müller, Ethelston, and the wounded man. Great was their astonishment at recognizing in the latter a highly-esteemed brave of their own tribe, and greater still at observing that the two white men were so busily engaged in tending and supporting him in his sufferings, as not to have noticed their approach.

When Ethelston became aware of their presence, his first impulse was to lay his hand upon a pistol in his belt, but with a steady self

possession of true courage, he saw at a glance that he should, by unavailing resistance, only cause the certain death of himself and his peaceable companion, so he continued his attentions to the wounded man, and poured into his mouth the last few drops of a cordial which he had reserved in a leathern flask.

Fresh from the slaughter of the unfortunate Attō Mahéga now came forward, and would have sacrificed the unresisting Missionary to his blind fury, had not one of the Crow warriors caught his arm, and pointed in an attitude of remonstrance to his wounded comrade.

The Osage perceived at once that the time was not propitious for his indiscriminate revenge, and contented himself with explaining by signs to his allies that ere long the party now out of sight behind the hill, would reappear over its crest in search of their missing companions.

This hint was not lost upon the Crows, who forthwith deprived Ethelston of his arms, and, tying him with a leather thong to the Missionary, hurried them along in an oblique direction towards an adjoining thicket, while some of them relieved each other in the care of the dying man.

War-Eagle was already far advanced in his descent of the hill on the opposite side, when his progress was arrested by shouts and cries from the rear. On looking round he perceived that these proceeded from Monsieur Perrot, who was waving his arms, and with other gesticulations, indicative of the greatest excitement, calling upon the chief to return.

"Varicle, Varicle, come quick back!"

Although the latter had little regard for the character of the French valet, he saw that something alarming had occurred; and hastening to the spot, scarcely waited to hear his explanation that "Monsieur Etelston, de Black Fader, and de vounded Corbeau, were not to be seen," but pushed on at once to the top of the hill, over which he had so lately passed.

Casting his anxious eyes around, he looked in vain for the missing members of his party; but he saw at a considerable distance on the back trail the Missionary's pony quietly cropping the prairie-grass. Having called one of his men to his side and given him a few brief instructions, he returned speedily towards the scene of the late catastrophe, and on approaching it, found the scalped and plundered body of Attō, from which the Crows had carried off the arms, the belt, and the bear-claw collar given to him by Reginald. Although deeply grieved at the loss of the bravest of his followers, War-Eagle was too much inured to scenes of strife and bloodshed to give way to any emotion save the ardent desire for revenge; and he struck off alone upon the enemy's trail, some of his party following him at a distance.

As he approached the thicket, his attention was caught by a column of smoke ascending from a point near the centre of it; and he judged that the band must be very strong, either in their position or in numbers, if they could have the audacity thus to light a camp-fire in defiance, as it were, of his pursuit. Influenced by this consideration, he waited until his whole party had come up, when he again moved forward towards the wood, cautiously watching every bush and shrub, in momentary expectation of seeing the enemy start from the covert.

These precautions seemed, however, altogether unnecessary; for he reached unmolested the spot whence he had seen the smoke ascend, and on his arrival found that the fire was consuming the last mortal remains of some human being, whose bones were mingled with its dying embers. This he knew at once to have been the wounded Crow who had expired in the arms of his companions, and to whom they had paid in their retreat this hasty funeral rite, to prevent his body from being liable to any indignities in the event of a pursuit. The quiver and tomahawk of the deceased warrior were suspended by a branch over his funeral pyre, and War-Eagle turned from the spot in moody, silent meditation. He felt assured that the retreating party were now too far advanced for him to overtake them, unless he gave up the idea of joining Reginald; and he thought it by no means improbable that this attack had been devised for the purpose of preventing that junction so important to the safety of both parties; wherefore he resolved to effect it without delay, and afterwards to employ all possible means for the recovery of the prisoners.

With this view he returned upon the steps; and having seen the last honours paid to the remains of the faithful Attō, again proceeded in the direction of the Crow camp.

As his little band drew near upon the prairie it was distinctly visible from both the fortified hills, and some fifty or sixty horsemen galloped out from the higher of the two, with the apparent intention of attacking him; but the steady front presented by the white men and Delawares deterred them from approaching too near the glittering tubes levelled to receive them, and they galloped and wheeled in rapid circles over the prairie, taking care, however, to keep beyond rifle range. At this juncture the cheering notes of a bugle rose on the air; and Reginald, who had descried his friends, now came down with two men from his little garrison to meet them. The Crows, seeing that further opposition on the open ground was unavailing, retired with threats and yells to their camp; and a few minutes afterwards the parties under War-Eagle and Reginald were reunited within the little fortress so hardly won by the latter, who now learnt, with unspeakable regret, the capture of Ethelston and Paul Müller, and the death of the brave warrior who had shared with him the perils of the first skirmish with the Crows.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The negotiation set on foot by Reginald for the release of his friends.—Besha becomes an important personage.

Scarcely had War-Eagle entered within the breastwork by the side of his friend, ere his eager and indefatigable spirit prompted him to inspect the defences of their new camp, and to guard every approach open to the attacks of their dangerous neighbours. On this service Baptiste willingly agreed to accompany the chief; and while they were thus employed, Reginald undertook the painful task of examin-

nicating to Prairie-bird the intelligence that her beloved instructor was, with his friend Ethelston, a captive in the hands of the Crows.

Trials and sufferings of her own the maiden could bear with fortitude; but her feelings towards the missionary were those of the fondest daughter towards a parent; and when she thought of the risk that he incurred of ill-usage r death at the hands of his captors, she burst nto tears, and exclaimed, "Oh, Reginald! annot he be rescued ere it be too late?"

At the sound of that voice, and the sight of those tears, Reginald's heart would have prompted him to rush headlong into the camp of the Upsarokas; but he felt that he would thereby only sacrifice his own life without effecting the object in view; and, moreover, he was by no means certain whether Mahéga and his party had conveyed their prisoners to the central camp.

The doubt and anxiety of his mind were plainly visible on his countenance, when a low voice whispered in his ear, "May Wingenund speak to Netis?"

"Surely, dear brother," said Reginald, laying his hand kindly on the youth's shoulder, "when I remember that it was Wingenund who guided me over the prairie to his sister's tent, I were worse than ungrateful to reject his counsel now!"

"That young woman," he replied, pointing to the captive bride seated in the corner of the tent, "is dear to the Upsaroka chief; she is his youngest wife, and his heart is warm towards her. Let the one-eyed stranger from the unknown tribes, who speaks many tongues, go back to the Crow camp, and tell the chief that [illegible] priseners are hurt, his bride shall be burnt [illegible]; if they are set free, she shall return unhurt to his lodge."

"It is a brave device, dear Wingenund, and shall be executed without loss of time; but can we trust the stranger?"

"Methinks you may," said Prairie-bird, "for he received his wound in defending me from those cruel men."

"True," replied Reginald; "let my brother speak to him in the Delaware tongue, and explain the message he is to bear."

"It is well," answered the youth; adding, with an arch look, "and let Netis not send him away with empty hands. There is cunning in the stranger's eye, he knows that Mahéga is poor; and he will rather make friends with those who have something to give."

"Be it so," said Reginald laughing; and he forthwith desired one of his men to select from a package containing knives, powder, tobacco, and cloth, a quantity equal to the usual Indian price for a horse. Wingenund, having waited in silence the return of the messenger, addressed the prisoner as follows:—

"Has the stranger a name in his tribe?"

"He is called Besha in the southern prairies."

"Besha dwells among the Crows. They have shed the blood of white men and Delawares in battle; his scalp belongs to those who have taken him."

The horse-dealer bowed in silence, and the youth continued.

"*But* the heart of the white chief is great; *he will not take Besha's life*, neither will he bind *his limbs. Besha is free to go* where he likes."

The horse-dealer stared as if he did not quite believe his ears; but Wingenund, without appearing to notice his surprise, proceeded.

"That is not all. Besha received a wound in defending Olitipa from the Washashe. The white chief's hand is open; it is quick to reward good deeds, and to punish bad ones; the presents in that package, of knives and cloth tobacco and powder, are for Besha; he may return to the Upsaroka camp, and his friends sha. not say that he comes with empty hands."

The deep-set eye of the horse-dealer gleamed with pleasure, as he fixed it on the welcome bale, and heard these words. His first movement was to rise from the ground, and place the right hands of Reginald and of Wingenund on his heart in token of gratitude; then turning towards the latter, he inquired, "Is there a dark cloud over the Upsaroka bride? Will the white chief kill her, or make her a slave?"

"Let Besha open his ears," replied the youth, earnestly, "and let not the wind blow away good counsel. The Washashe and the Upsaroka have taken captive two white men from this band; these have killed no red man; they have done no harm. If any hurt be done to them, or their lives be taken, the Upsaroka bride shall be burn before the next setting sun; but if they are sen back free and unhurt, she shall return to he husband the same hour, and a present fou times as great as this shall be given to Besha.'

Having thus spoken, the youth placed the package in the horse-dealer's hands, and made him a sign to go. Before obeying this hint, the latter whispered a few words to Bending-willow, in which he comforted her with the assurance that he would labour incessantly for her release; after which he departed towards the Crow camp, with a gait somewhat tottering and uncertain, from the joint effect of the weight of his burden and the wound that he had so lately received.

We will now leave Reginald engaged in the sad, yet dear employment of comforting his betrothed, and striving, by a thousand suggestions, to relieve her anxiety respecting the fate of her beloved instructor, and her lover's friend. Neither will we follow War-Eagle and Baptiste in securing the important post which they had so unexpectedly won; but we will return to the Crow camp, where Mahéga had newly arrived with his prisoners, and where everything was in a state of alarm and confusion.

Great had been the panic consequent on the double defeat which they had sustained; nor had its effects been entirely removed by the successful blow last struck by Mahéga, and the capture of the two white men. The Osage chief had lost all his warriors, with the exception of four, his baggage and ammunition were in the hands of the enemy, and he well knew that his only remaining chance of retaining the support of his allies, was in vigorously pursuing the success which he had so opportunely gained. The Crow chief, on the other hand, disheartened by the loss and disgrace which had befallen his tribe, and vexed beyond measure at the detention of his son's favourite wife, justly attributed both these misfortunes to an alliance which had brought no increase either to his power or his wealth.

Such was the state of parties when the coun

cil of the Upsarokas met to decide upon the fate of their prisoners. The debate being carried on in their own language, Mahéga was unable to gather the sentiments of the several speakers, and he declined to sit in the circle, but stood leaning against the outer post of the council lodge, his quick eye bent upon the countenance of each successive speaker, as if he would read there the purport of his harangue. One fierce and hot-headed warrior proposed that the prisoners should be instantly put to death, and a sudden attack be made with their whole force on the opposite hill, which would be easily recovered, and an abundance of plunder acquired. An older Indian next addressed the meeting in a persuasive tone, that suited well the sharp and cunning expression of his countenance. He argued, that the Crows had derived no advantage, but rather loss and misfortune, from their alliance with Mahéga, and that it was their interest to make friends with the newly-arrived band, who were more rich and powerful; wherefore he advised that the lives of the prisoners should for the present be spared.

The debate was at its height, and the assembly apparently divided in opinion, when Besha entered the council-lodge, and sat down in the outer circle near to the entrance. All eyes were turned to him, as the report of his capture had already spread through the village, and his wasted appearance, as well as the bandages over his neck and arm, showed that he had been wounded in the late affray. After a brief silence, the chief desired that he would relate what had occurred, a command which the horse-dealer obeyed without hesitation.

Although not gifted with any orational powers, he was a shrewd fellow, thoroughly versed in all the [illegible]s of Indian diplomacy; and well aware, as a resident guest among the Crows, that his best chance of a favourable hearing was to frame his speech according to their interests, which happened in the present instance to tally with his own. In relating the events which had occurred in the opposite camp, he exaggerated the strength and wealth of the enemy, dwelling at large upon the clemency shown to himself, and upon the desire evinced for peace; stating, in conclusion, that he was the bearer of a specific message, or proposal, to the great chief. At this announcement there was a general murmur of curiosity, and Mahéga bit his lip with vexation at his inability to understand what was going on.

At a signal from the chief, Besha proceeded to inform the council that Bending-willow, the bride of their favourite and absent war-leader, was now a captive; and he recounted faithfully the circumstances under which she had visited the white tent with him, and the terrible threats held out respecting her in the event of any injury being done to the white prisoners. The effect of this announcement was so great, that it was visible even to Mahéga; nor was he surprised when Besha explained to him, by order of the chief, that the council had decided upon sparing the lives of the white men, at least until the return of the war-leader and his band of braves, now absent on a foray into the country of the Black-feet.

Agreeably to this decision, Paul Müller and Ethelston were confined in a lodge adjoining that of the chief, under a Crow guard, to whom strict orders were given to prevent their escape, and also to protect them against any attempt on the part of Mahéga or his followers. Besha was allowed to see them, and they learnt from him that their friends had been completely successful, and had re-captured the Great Medicine of the tent, as well as the ammunition and baggage. He further informed them, that he would do all in his power to effect their release; adding a significant hint that he should not be unwilling to receive tangible proofs of their gratitude.

The captives were, upon the whole, much comforted by this interview; and on his departure, Ethelston said, addressing his companion, "Reverend father, we have cause to be grateful for the intelligence communicated to us by this man, inasmuch as we expected no less than to be put to an immediate, and perhaps a cruel death. Yet, methinks, for a messenger of good tidings, he has the most uncomely and villainous countenance that ever I beheld."

"I will not say that his face recommends him," said Paul Müller, smiling; "albeit, the expression thereof may have been altered for the worse by the loss of an eye. I have seen him more than once before among the tribes bordering upon the Mexican frontier, and if my memory serves me, he bore the reputation of being a crafty and designing knave in his vocation; but I never heard him charged with cruelty, or thirst of blood."

"What, then, do you think, are the motives for the friendly exertions which he professes to make in our behalf?"

"We will hope that they are partly owing to a grateful sense of the treatment he has experienced at the hands of our friend Reginald, and partly from the expectation of presents and rewards, which the Osage is no longer in a condition to offer. Meanwhile, we must solace ourselves in our captivity with the reflection, that my beloved pupil is safe under the charge of friends, upon whose fidelity and devotion we can fully rely."

Leaving the captives to comfort each other with these and other similar suggestions, we will return to Reginald Brandon, who forgot not, even in the enjoyment of Prairie-bird's society to occupy himself constantly in devising plans for their liberation. In these he was warmly seconded by War-Eagle and Baptiste; but, after carefully reconnoitring the Crow camp, they agreed that it was too strong to be carried by open attack by their small party, especially as they had learnt from Besha, that the husband of Bending-willow, the son of the Great Chief, had just returned with his band, consisting of fifty chosen warriors, from a successful foray into the Black-foot country.

The wily horse-dealer was allowed, in his mixed capacity of interpreter and envoy, to pass from camp to camp; and as both parties were desirous of securing his co-operation, presents were liberally heaped upon him, and his grey eye twinkled as he cast it upon the increasing pile of goods at the back of his lodge. "There will soon be enough to exchange for a hundred beaver-skins," said he to himself, "then Besha will look for some fine horses, and go towards the east."

While he was thus congratulating himself on his prospects of future wealth, a tall figure darkened the entrance of his lodge, and the young war-chief stood before him. "*White-Bull** would speak with Besha," said the former in a haughty tone, adjusting with dignity the cream-coloured robe from which he took his designation.

"Let the young chief be seated," replied the horse-dealer, making at the same time a signal to one of his lads to offer food and a pipe to his guest.

White-Bull's first impulse was to refuse this hospitality, but he checked it, and having tasted a morsel, and emitted two voluminous puffs of smoke from the pipe, he turned to the horse-dealer, and said in a stern, deep tone, "Bending-willow is a prisoner in the white tent; Besha took her there, he must bring her back, for the heart of White-Bull is dark—there is no light or pleasure without her."

"The will of the bride was strong," he replied; "she would take no counsel from Besha; if he did not go with her, she would go alone, to consult the Medicine of the tent; Besha went with her that none might do her harm."

"The ears of White-Bull are not to be tickled by the songs of birds," said the young chief, fiercely. "Besha took her to the white men's camp, and he must bring her back before two suns have set, or his heart shall be cut out from his body."

"White-Bull knows that there are two white prisoners here, let him give them to Besha, and he will bring back Bending-willow before the sun is in the west."

"The white prisoners belong to the war-council," said the young man sullenly. "White-Bull cares not whether they live or die; but he wants his bride, whom the fool Besha led away to a place where she was caught like a beaver in a trap; if he does not bring her back within two sun-sets, the blade of this knife shall be red. White-Bull has spoken, and his words are not wind!" So saying, the violent youth passed with angry strides from the horse-dealer's lodge.

Besha now found himself in an awkward predicament, in endeavouring to extricate himself from which, his first step was to consult the young chief's father, hoping that the latter would give his consent at once to release the prisoners for the recovery of the favourite bride. But the old man would not agree to the proposal, giving as his reason, that the council had resolved either to take the lives of the prisoners, or to make the enemy pay many horses and much goods for their ransom. "Besha has a tongue," continued the crafty old man. "He can speak with the white men; he can tell them that if the bride is given up their friends shall be returned, they will believe him, and all will be well."

"Besha, though not particularly scrupulous in his morality, was startled at first by this proposal of treacherous and deliberate falsehood towards one who had spared his life, and had given him his liberty, besides loading him with presents; but his conscience being of an extremely elastic texture, he soon reconciled himself to the idea by the reflection that it was his best, if not his only chance of saving his life from the fury of the incensed White-Bull. He made no reply to the old chief; but, as he went away, the two rogues exchanged a look which satisfied them that they understood each other.

The horse-dealer proceeded without delay to the lodge where Paul Müller and Ethelston were confined, into which he was admitted by their guards. Having explained to the Missionary that he was about to visit the white men's camp for the purpose of liberating him and his companion by the recovery of the captive bride, he desired to be furnished with a sign by which they would be induced to give her up without hesitation; for Besha, in his rambles on the Mexican frontier, had frequently met with the Spanish traders, and although he could not read letters himself, he knew how they were used for the interchange of communication at a distance.

Before giving any reply, Paul Müller explained the state of affairs to his companion, and asked his counsel.

"Methinks we should trust the fellow," said Ethelston, "for he has hitherto befriended us: but let us not write anything that can endanger the safety of Prairie-bird."

"I agree with you, my son," he replied. "and will write accordingly."

So saying, he took a small pocket-book from his breast, and wrote with a pencil upon a leaf of it the following words:

"Ethelston and Paul Müller send their affectionate greeting. The bearer says that he can liberate them if the captive bride is restored. Reginald Brandon will consult with [illegible]e about him, and do what he thinks best. L[illegible] safety of Prairie-bird, and of those who ar[illegible] protectors, be the first object. Glad [illegible] thankful should we be to embrace our dear friends again; but we are well and cheerful here; in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death, we are in the hands of One who rules all for the best Farewell."

Having received the paper, Besha lost no time in setting off to the opposite camp

CHAPTER XXXIX.

David Muir and his Daughter pay a Visit to Colonel Brandon.—The Merchant becomes ambitious.—He entertains Projects for Jessie's future Welfare, which do not coincide with that young Lady's Wishes.

While the events related in the preceding chapters were passing in the Great Western Wilderness, the days of early summer glided smoothly on at Mooshanne, uninterrupted by any incident worthy of record. Aunt Mary continued her round of busy occupation with her usual indefatigable activity. Never could there occur in the neighbourhood a case of sickness or of sorrow to which she did not hasten to administer the needful consolation; and in the town of Marietta her benevolent exertions were assisted by Jessie Muir, whose attendance in her father's store enabled her to gather all the current news from the numerous customers who frequented it.

"The Merchant" (for so David Muir was designated by all who did not wish to affront

* It was at one time currently rumoured among the trappers of the Rocky Mountains, that a Crow warrior had found and killed a white bison-bull, the skin of which he *wore as a robe*. The story, whether true or false, is *adopted here, and assigned to the husband of "Bending-willow."*

aim) grew daily in importance and dignity. His speculations in trade had been, for the most part, successful, and two or three of his suggestions for the improvement of the town had been adopted. A sharp attack of fever had subdued for a season the domineering spirit of Dame Christie, and David found himself not only respected by the neighbours, but even enjoyed the sweet, though brief delusion, that he was master in his own house.

Neither his pride nor his increasing wealth interrupted, however, his close attention to business; and Colonel Brandon, finding that the affairs entrusted to him were managed with great punctuality and skill, treated him with corresponding confidence.

On a fine summer's morning, about a month after Ethelston's departure for the Far-West, the merchant's four-wheeled chaise stood before his door, drawn, not by a sorry pony, but by a strong horse, the condition and appearance of which betokened the thriving circumstances of the owner. Jessie Muir, wearing a very becoming bonnet, and a shawl newly arrived from England, had just cast a passing look into the oval mirror in the back parlour, and was busily employed in giving directions respecting the contents of a parcel about to be placed in the seat of the chaise, while Henry Gregson was listening, with ill-dissembled impatience, to the repeated cautions given to him by David as to his conduct during the brief absence which he meditated.

"Noo, Hairy" (for thus was the name of Harry pronounced in David's north-country dialect), "ye maun be vera carefu' o' the store, and see that the lads attend weel to the folk wha come to buy, and that Jane stays aye amang the caps an' shawls and printed cottons, instead of keekin out o' the window at a wheen idle ne'er-do-weels in the street; and as for the last lot of Bohea, ye can truly say it's the finest that ever cam' to Marietta; I'm thinkin' the minister's wife will be fain to buy a pun' or twa. And, Hairy, mind that ye .... but the deil's in the lad! What are ye glow'ring at, over my shoulder, as if ye se'ed a wraith, an' no listening to what I'm sayin'?"

Here the merchant turned round, and his eye happening to fall upon a parcel of fire-irons, so carelessly placed on an upper shelf that they threatened the destruction of a pile of crockery below, he ordered the shop-boy to secure the offending tongs, and, turning to Harry, continued in a more complacent tone, "It's nae wonder, lad, that ye could na tak' your een off they irons; they had like to make an awfu' smash amang the cups and saucers; I'm glad to see that ye're so canny and carefu' o' the goods."

Harry bit his lips, and made no reply, while the merchant, who had already seen Jessie take her seat in the chaise, was preparing to follow, when he turned to the young man, and said, in a low voice, "Ye'll no forget that the mistress will need her gruel at midday?"

"I will take care that it is not forgotten; and I suppose, sir, the glass of French brandy is to be put into it?"

"Glass o' French brandy, ye daft chiel," said the merchant, forgetting for a moment the prudential whisper; then resuming it, he added, "Wha talks o' glasses o' French brandy? Ye ken, tho', that the mistress has no gotten her strength yet, and she said she would like just four spoonfu's o' brandy in the gruel, to gie't a taste and keep the cauld out o' her wame. Ye ken the mistress's ain spoon in the tea-cupboard?"

"Yes, sir, I know it well," replied Harry with demure gravity, adding, half aloud, as his principal drove from the door, "and a precious gravy-spoon it is; before it is four times filled and emptied it will make the largest wine-glass in the store run over the brim, and the old lady's tongue go like a mill-wheel. Never mind, for Jessie's sake I'll brew the gruel as stiff as my father's grog, and bear Dame Christie's scolds without complaint."

"He's a canny, douce lad, yon Hairy," said the merchant to his daughter, as they jolted leisurely along the uneven but picturesque road that led from Marietta to Mooshanne, "and does na' care to rin about the toon like other idle gillies, but seems aye content to min' the store. Did ye see, Jessie, how he caught, wi' ae blink o' his ee, the airns that were about to fa' amongst my best Wedgewood?"

Had the merchant not been occupied, as he put this question, in guiding the wheels between sundry deep ruts and holes in the road, he could not have failed to observe the heightened colour that it brought into Jessie's countenance; for the maiden was conscious that, at the moment referred to, Harry's gaze had been fixed, not upon the fire-irons or the Wedgewood, but upon her own comely self.

It is one of the peculiar properties and triumphs of love that, not content with securing its own position in the human heart, it delights in unsettling and metamorphosing the tenants by which it was previously occupied. Under its wayward sway boldness becomes timidity and fierceness is transformed into gentleness, while bashfulness is rendered bold, and simplicity has recourse to the devices of cunning!

Thus Jessie Muir, who was naturally of a frank, open disposition, but who had a secret presentiment that her father would reject the suit of her lover if it were now to be declared, acquiesced demurely in his observation respecting the attention shown by Harry Gregson to the business of the store.

"Weel, a-weel," continued the merchant, "he's a gude lad, and no ill-faured neither; I'm thinkin', Jessie, that he and Jean will, maybe, fancy each other; they're aye thegither i' the store, an' the bit lassie might gae further and fare waur than by takin' up wi' Hairy."

This speech was too much for Jessie's equanimity; the coolness with which her father spoke of his servant-maid "takin' up" with her lover stung her to the quick, and she replied, tartly, "Father, I wish you would mind your driving among these holes and stumps, instead of talking about Jean and her idle nonsense. Indeed, father, that last jolt nearly threw me out of the chaise."

"Weel, Jessie, ye need na mak' such a pother about a stump mair or less atween Marietta and Mooshanne; and though I'll no say that my drivin' is like that of Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, ye need na fear that I'll coup the braw new chaise for a' that."

Jessie was well pleased to have turned her father's thoughts into another channel, and being a little ashamed of the momentary irritation to which she had given way, she now exerted herself to please and amuse him, in which she succeeded so well that they reached Mooshanne

in cheerful mood, and with wheels uninjured by hole or stump.

Colonel Brandon, seeing the merchant drive up to the door just as he, with Lucy and Aunt Mary, were about to sit down to dinner, went himself to the door, and, with the frank hospitality of his nature, invited him and his daughter to share their family meal. This invitation was no small gratification to the pride of David Muir, who had on former visits to Mooshanne regaled himself with Monsieur Perrot in the pantry. The boxes and parcels having been safely deposited, and the chaise sent round to the stable, Lucy aided Jessie to uncloak and unbonnet, and in a few minutes the party, thus increased, found themselves assembled at the Colonel's table.

"My worthy friend," said the latter, addressing his guest, "you seem to have brought an unusual variety of packages to-day; I suppose the greater part of them are for Lucy's benefit rather than for mine?"

"Maybe Jessie has brought a few things fresh frae Philadelphy for Miss Lucy to look at," replied David; "but the maist part o' what I hae wi' me the day, came late yestreen, by Rob Mitchell's batteau from St. Louis. There's a wheen letters and parcels frae Messieurs Steiner and Roche, which will, nae doubt, explain the settlement o' the matter anent your shares in the fur trade."

"Are there not any other letters from Saint Louis?" inquired Lucy, colouring slightly.

"There's nane, my bonny young leddy," replied David, "excepting twa, ane frae auld Miller, to acknowledge the receipt o' the last ten barrels o' saut pork that I sent him, and anither frae Reuben Stiggs, wha keeps the great outfitting store for trappers, to order an early freight o' blankets, Bibles, religious tracts, scalp-knives, and whisky, for the Indian trade."

In spite of her disappointment, Lucy could not forbear smiling at the gravity with which the merchant enumerated this strange mixture of goods ordered for a warehouse, to which the missionary and the trapper both resorted for their respective supplies.

The dinner passed agreeably enough; and Jessie Muir having soon recovered from the diffident shyness by which she had been at first overcome, amused Lucy and Aunt Mary by her quiet but shrewd observations on persons and things in Marietta, while the merchant enjoyed, with evident satisfaction, several glasses from a certain bottle of madeira, which he knew to have been for some years deposited in his own warehouse.

As soon as dinner was over, the ladies retired to Lucy's boudoir, where she examined the contents of the packages which Jessie had brought for her inspection, while Colonel Brandon looked over the letters and papers from St. Louis. These proved to be of considerable importance, as they announced that all the points in dispute with the other fur company had been satisfactorily arranged, and that his own shares, as well as those in which Ethelston's property was chiefly invested, had risen greatly in value. During the perusal of this correspondence the Colonel spoke from time to time familiarly and unreservedly with his companion. He had learned from Lucy the attachment that existed between Henry Gregson and the merchant's daughter, and had formed an internal resolution to contribute to its successful issue by advancing to the young man a sum sufficient to enable him either to enter into partnership with the merchant, or to commence business on his own account; but it was not his intention to develope this scheme until he had spoken with the elder Gregson wherefore he contented himself for the present with sounding the merchant in vague and general terms respecting the disposal of his daughter's hand.

"My good friend," said the Colonel, "now that we have despatched our business, it occurs to me that I ought to remind you of a circumstance which may not yet have entered your thoughts, namely, that your daughter Jessie is grown up to be a very pretty, sensible, and discreet young woman, and that having no son of your own, you ought to seek for her a worthy husband, who might hereafter aid her in comforting the declining years of Dame Christie and yourself."

During this address the merchant fidgeted on his chair, and betrayed other evident symptoms of uneasiness; but he made no reply, and the Colonel continued: "I think I know of a young man who has long entertained an attachment for her; and, if I am not mistaken, Miss Jessie would be more likely to smile than to frown upon his suit. Feeling myself not a little interested in his future prospects, I should, if Mrs. Muir and yourself approve the match, willingly contribute, as far as lies in my power, to their comfortable settlement."

"Really, Colonel Brandon, ye're vera kind, I can no' fin' words to thank ye," stammered David, who seemed to have lost his self-possession; and before he could recover it so far as to make any distinct reply, Lucy came into the room; and taking the Colonel's arm, looked up affectionately into his face, saying, "Dear father, you have given enough time now to business; come into my room and hear one of Jessie's Scotch songs. I have just been listening to one which was written, as she tells me, by Robert Burns; it is so simple and so beautiful, she has promised to sing it over again for you."

The Colonel smiled, and followed his daughter, saying to the merchant as they left the room, "We will speak further on that subject the next time that we meet."

As soon as the little party was assembled in the boudoir, Colonel Brandon entreated Jessie Muir to fulfil her promise of singing again the song which had given so much pleasure to his daughter. Blushing slightly, Jessie complied, and sung, in a voice of much natural sweetness and without accompaniment:

"Oh! wert thou in the cauld, cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry *airt*,*
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around the blaw;
Thy *bield*† should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

"Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black an' bare, sae black an' bare;
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Should be my queen, should be my queen."

The Colonel having bestowed not undeserved praise upon the taste and feeling with which Jessie had sung her simple melody, added, "Yet I do not remember these words among the songs

* "Angry airt,' the quarter whence the angry wind was blowing † Shelter

of the Ayrshire bard. Lucy, you have often read to me from the volume of his poems which came from England; do you recollect having seen this song among them?"

"Indeed I do not," replied Lucy; "yet it is so full of his peculiar force of expression and feeling, that it is difficult to believe it to have been written by any one else."

"I have been told," said Jessie, "that this song was found among his papers after his death. This may be the reason why you have not seen it in your volume."

The conversation having once turned upon the subject of the writings of Ayrshire's immortal bard, whose fame was then spreading far and wide over the habitable globe, it dwelt for some time upon the attractive theme; and the tall pines were already beginning to cast their lengthened shadows over the lawn, ere the merchant remembered that Dame Christie might be "wearyin'" for his return, and perhaps scold him for exposing himself and his daughter to the perils of the Mooshanne stump-studded track in the dusk of evening. The chaise having been ordered to the door, David Muir put on his hat and cloak, while Jessie donned her bonnet and shawl; and a few minutes saw them jogging steadily away on their return to Marietta.

For some time neither broke the silence of the deep forest through which they were driving, for each had their own subject for meditation. Jessie, whose spirit was softened by the songs of her father-land, and had been touched by the gentle kindness of Lucy's manner towards her, looked steadily towards the west; and while she thought that she was admiring the gigantic hemlock pines, whose huge limbs now came out in bold relief from the ruddy saffron sky beyond, her musings blended in sweet but vague confusion the banks of Allan, Doon, and Ayr, with those of the river beside her, and pictured the "Jamies," "Willies," and other "braw, braw lads" of Scottish minstrelsy, in the form of no less a personage than Harry Gregson.

She was roused from her reverie by the voice of her father, whose meditations had taken quite a different direction, as will be seen by the conversation that ensued between them.

"Jessie, it's a gae bonnie house, yon Mooshanne, an' the mailen's* the best in th' haill Territory."

"Indeed, father, it is a very pretty house, and most kind are those who live in it."

"Wad ye no' like to live in it yoursel, Jessie?"

"To say truth, father, I would rather live in a smaller house that I might call my own."

"But suppose ye might ca' yon fine house your own, what wad ye say then, lassie?" This inquiry was enforced with a significant poke from the merchant's elbow.

Jessie looked up in her father's face, and seeing that it was unusually grave, she replied, "Father, I do not understand what you are aiming at. I am very happy in our house at Marietta, and wish for none better."

"Ye're a fule," said the merchant, angrily. "I tell ye, Jessie, ye're no better than a fule; and when fortun' hauds oot her han' to ye, ye'll no' gang half-way to tak' it. Hae ye no' seen how oft Maister Reginald comes to our store, and hangs aboot it like a tod round a hen-roost?"

"Indeed, father, I have made no such remark; and if Master Reginald did often come to our store, it was for powder, or a knife, or some trifles for Miss Lucy, and not for any other cause."

"Hoot awa' wi' your pouther and knives, ye blind hizzie," said the merchant; "it was to see and speak wi' yoursel', and no' for any other cause."

"Father, I am sure you are mistaken; Master Reginald would never so far forget the difference in our rank and condition, and I should be very sorry if he did."

"What do ye mean, lass, about difference o' rank and condeetion? Are the Muirs no' as weel-born as ony lord or duke in the auld kintra? Do ye no' ken that my mother's father's sister was married to Muir of Drumliwhappit, an' that he was near cousin to the Laird o' Blagowrie, wha married the sister o' the Earl o' Glencairn? Rank and condeetion, indeed! as I tauld ye just now, ye're neither mair nor less than a fule, Jessie. Why, the Colonel spak' wi' me anent the matter this vera day, an' said that he'd do what lay in his power to mak' a smooth an' comfortable."

Jessie Muir was now, indeed, surprised; for she had hitherto imagined that the idea of Reginald Brandon having taken a fancy to her, was one of those crotchets which the merchant sometimes took up, and which he would then maintain with all the pertinacious obstinacy of his character; but she knew him to be incapable of a direct untruth, and was, therefore, overwhelmed with astonishment at the communication last made to her.

We should not faithfully portray Jessie's character were we to say that she experienced no secret gratification, when she learned that her hand was sought by one possessed of so many advantages of person and fortune; but we should do her injustice were we not to add, that the sensation endured only for a moment; and then her heart reverting to Henry Gregson, she thought only of the increased obstacles which would now interfere with their attachment, and she burst into tears.

"Dinna greet, lassie, dinna greet,"† said the merchant, surprised and somewhat softened by this unexpected emotion, and he muttered to himself, "There's no kenning the twists and krankums o' a woman's mind! I tell her that she's courted by a weel-faured young man, wi' the best prospects in the haill Territory, and she taks on to greet like a *skelpit wean*."†

After various ineffectual attempts to draw from her any explanation of the cause of her grief, he ceased to interrogate her, wisely resolving to consult Dame Christie on the subject, and they drove on in silence until they reached their home in Marietta.

As they entered the house they were met by Harry Gregson, who led the way into the parlour, where he placed in the merchant's hand a paper which had arrived during his absence, and which proved to be an extensive order for articles to be shipped for St. Louis on the following day.

While David Muir ran his eye over the list, calculating the amount of profit which he might expect to realize from the whole, young Gregson, observing the tears not yet dry upon Jessie's cheek, cast upon her a look of anxious affectionate inquiry, which seemed only to increase her confusion and distress.

* Farm-buildings.

† Cry or weep. † Whipped child.

"Father, I am tired," she whispered, in a subdued voice, "and will go to my room to rest." Having received his embrace, she turned towards the door, where Gregson presented to her a candle that he had lighted for her, and in so doing he took her hand and pressed it; she withdrew it gently, and, in reply to his "Good night, Miss Jessie," gave him in silence a parting look so full of mingled tenderness and grief, that his anxiety was no longer to be controlled, and he resolved to draw from the merchant some explanation of her agitation. Seeing that he had at length finished his careful perusal of the paper, he said, "I think, sir, that Miss Jessie looks very unwell this evening; has anything happened to hurt or alarm her?"

"Naething, naething, my gude lad, only I tauld her some news that ought to have made her blithe as a lavroch,* and she thought fit to wet her een wi' doolt† anent it."

"That is strange, indeed," replied the young man; and he added, in a hesitating tone, "I hope, sir, you will not think me impertinent, as I take so much interest in all that concerns your family, if I inquire what was the nature of the good news that you communicated to Miss Jessie?"

"Why, Hairy," replied the merchant, sinking his voice to a confidential whisper, "as ye're a discreet cannie lad, that'll no crack‡ about they things all ower the toon, I may just tell ye that Jessie—"

"David! David!" screamed a shrill voice from the room above, "are ye gaun to haver§ there the lee-lang night?"

"Comin' this moment, Christie," said the obedient husband, leaving the room as he spoke, with the air and countenance of one so thoroughly hen-pecked, that Harry Gregson, in spite of his anxiety, laughed outright; saying to himself, as many a lover has said before and since, "How unlike is Jessie's voice to that of her mother!"

CHAPTER XL.

Besha pursues his Career as a Diplomatist.—An agreeable Tête-à-Tête disagreeably interrupted.—The Steps that Mahéga took to support his declining Interests among the Crows.

We left Besha engaged in an attempt to liberate the bride of the young Crow chief, by proposing to Reginald and his party an exchange of prisoners.

On arriving at the camp he was allowed to pass by the sentries, and took his way up the hill to the tent of Prairie-bird. As soon as the object of his errand became known a council was held, consisting of Reginald Brandon, War-Eagle, Baptiste, Pierre, and Wingenund, and, having heard the proposal made on the part of the Crows, they proceeded to deliberate on the course to be pursued.

They could have no hesitation in agreeing to an exchange of prisoners, could that be effected upon equal terms, but the Crows insisted upon the return of Bending-willow as a preliminary step towards the release of their prisoners, and to this Baptiste and Pierre were most strongly opposed, especially the latter, who had experienced on more than one occasion the proverbial *treachery of the Upsaroka tribe.*

* Lark. † Sorrow.
‡ Gossip. § Chatter

Reginald was disposed, with the fearless generosity of his nature, to be satisfied with binding them by the most solemn obligations, recognised by their customs, to release their prisoners on the safe return of Bending-willow, but his opinion was overruled by his companions; and the horse-dealer's mission wore a most unpromising aspect, when he bethought him of delivering the note written by Paul Müller to Reginald.

The perusal of this effected an immediate alteration in the sentiments of the council, and the restoration of the captive bride was decided upon. She was seated in the outer compartment of Prairie-bird's tent when Besha entered, accompanied by Reginald, to inform her of her liberation.

Pierre, who was still suspicious of some treachery, and who had some knowledge of the Crow language, placed his ear at the corner of the aperture with the intention of discovering any under-plot that might be going forward.

Besha, however, was too crafty to be caught in such a trap, or else he did not intend to make Bending-willow the confident of his real intentions, so he simply announced to her that she was free to return to her husband's lodge, and that the white prisoners were to be restored in exchange for her.

Shaking off the sadness by which she had been of late overcome, she sprang to her feet, and her eyes sparkling with grateful joy, she pressed her hand upon Reginald's breast, then looking round, she pronounced distinctly the name of "Olitipa."

On hearing herself thus called, Prairie-bird came forth from her inner tent, and having learned the intelligence that, by the restoration of her new friend, the liberation of Paul Müller was to be effected, she embraced the former and presented her with a necklace of coral. Bending-willow returned the embrace with affectionate earnestness, and was then led by Besha from the tent.

As they passed towards the stockade, Pierre, whose suspicions were not yet entirely lulled, and who felt a deep interest in the safety of Ethelston, came up to the horse-dealer, and whispered in his ear, "If the tongues of the Crows, or of Besha, are forked, if the white prisoners are detained or injured, many widows shall howl in the camp, and the tongues of the wolves shall be red with Upsaroka blood!"

The Prairie-Guide spoke these words in a tone of deep meaning, and Besha knew that he was not a man likely to utter an idle or empty threat; he answered accordingly, "If Besha lives, the prisoners shall return unhurt before the next sunset," and so saying pursued his unmolested way to the Crow camp.

While they were crossing the valley which separated the two encampments, Reginald, War-Eagle, and Baptiste still lingered near the door of the tent, discussing the events of the day, and expressing their respective opinions as to the probable conduct of the Crows.

"What says Prairie-bird?" inquired Reginald, addressing the maiden, who had been a not uninterested auditor of the discussion.

"Has not the Crow chief," she replied, "given a faithful promise that on the return of the bride he would restore my father and his friend unhurt?"

"He has."

"What then is the doubt?"

"The doubt is, whether the word of the Crow can be believed? whether he may not still detain, or injure his prisoners?"

Prairie-bird mused for a few seconds, as if debating within herself the possibility of such falsehood; then raising her head, she said in a tone of emphasis, "Fear not: my father and your friend will return to us uninjured."

"I accept the omen, sweet prophetess!" exclaimed Reginald, cheerfully; "and will believe that their thoughts are honest and straightforward as you deem them, unless their conduct should prove the contrary; in that event," he added, turning to War-Eagle, "my Indian brother and I will see what our own heads and hands can do to set free our friends."

The chief replied not; but the sarcastic smile that played over his dark features, showed how little he shared in Prairie-bird's opinion of Upsaroka faith.

Meanwhile, Bending-willow returned in safety to her lodge, where Besha presented her, with an air of triumph, to her impatient lord. The other wives and women retired while she related to him her adventures, and from the mingled laughter and caresses with which he listened to her narrative, it is probable that she confessed to him the motive that had induced her to seek the Medicine of the white tent.

As soon as she concluded, he desired one of his young men to lead before the lodge a favourite horse, swift, high-couraged, and strong, from the back of which he had killed, with lance and bow, many a bison cow. Placing the bridle of raw hide in the hands of the horse-dealer, he said, "Besha has brought back the Sweet-scented-willow to its bed, he shall not go away with empty hands. When he rides through the village the warriors shall say that his horse is fit to carry a chief; and if any speak to him bad words, let him tell them to beware, for White Bull calls him brother!"

So saying, the young savage, who had now completely recovered his good humour, half-lifted, half-threw the astonished dealer upon the horse's back, and turned again into the lodge to renew his caresses to his recovered bride.

"All goes well!" thought Besha within himself, as he rode towards his own quarters, proving with professional skill, the paces and qualities of his new steed. "All goes well! and this animal will fetch me two hundred dollars in the lower Arkansas country; few such are to be found there. I wonder where this Crow thief found or stole it? If I can manage with fine words to get a few more skins from this tribe, and a few more presents from the white men, I will join the summer return-train from the Black Hills, and make my way back towards the east."

Indulging in these honest and disinterested meditations, the horse-dealer arrived before his own lodge, where his Indian wife awaited his coming with a savoury mess of bison-meat and marrow; after despatching which he smoked his pipe, without permitting any reflections concerning the prisoners whose cause he had so shamelessly betrayed, to disturb his appetite, or his present lazy enjoyment.

It was fortunate for them that they had an advocate more honest and zealous in a quarter where they least suspected it. This was Bending-willow; who, after showing to her lover-husband the coral necklace given to her by Prairie-bird, and repeating to him the kind treatment that she had experienced in the tent, entreated him to use his influence for the restoration of the prisoners.

This she was not able to effect, as he stated that they belonged to the great council, who would decide upon their fate, after consulting the Medicine; but she obtained from him a promise that he would in the meantime protect them from all chance injury, as well as from the violence of any personal enemy who might bear them ill-will.

The deliberations of the Indian tribes are, in fact, carried on in a manner more strongly resembling those of civilised nations than is usually believed; that is, a few leading men meet together, and arrange the plan of operations to be pursued, after which they convoke the grand council by whatever name it may be called, and insensibly lead its members to propose, second, and carry the measures previously agreed upon. Thus it was with the Crows upon the present occasion. The old chief of the band, as soon as he learned the safe return of Bending-willow, sent for his son the White-Bull, whose rank as leader of the braves entitled him to be present at a secret council; two other warriors, of more advanced age and experience, were also admitted; and these four being assembled, they entered upon their deliberations with a freedom of thought and speech such as could not have been consistent with the forms and usages of a public meeting.

It would be tedious to relate in order the various arguments that were adduced by the several speakers in turn; suffice it to say, that the father of White-Bull, independent of his claim to authority as chief, happened to be the oldest man and the greatest rogue present; all which concurrent advantages gave a preponderating influence to his advice. The result was, as might have been expected, its adoption by the unanimous consent of his three companions; and, as the after-movements of the band were regulated by it, a brief sketch of its purport and objects will not be misplaced.

His counsel, stripped of Indian imagery and ornament, was, that they should for the present detain the prisoners; and in order to avoid the consequences of the violent ebullition of resentment which might be expected on the part of the White Men and Delawares, that they should instantly decamp, and marching towards the south and west by the most intricate and difficult passes, make their way to the neighbourhood of the district where Mahéga informed them that he had concealed his goods and stores. These it was their intention, of course, to appropriate, and afterwards to deal with their dangerous and haughty possessor as might be found most expedient. Meanwhile it was certain that the allied band would follow their trail for the recovery of the prisoners, and if they did so, with their baggage and Prairie-bird's tent, the Crows had little fear of being overtaken, excepting when they chose to halt for the purpose; if, on the contrary, the allied band should divide, the chief knew that from the intimate acquaintance of his warriors with the localities, they would easily find means to attack and overcome the weakened party left in charge of the tent, and its wonderful mistress.

This outline of operations being settled, it was further agreed that the prisoners should be entrusted to the care of White-Bull, who made himself responsible for their security, and who was to lead the van of the retreat, while Besha was summoned, and ordered to explain to the Osage chief the proposed plan of operations, an-

hat to him was to be assigned the honourable ost of defending the rear of the march.

In consequence of all these preliminary arrangements, a formal council was summoned, at which they were proposed and agreed upon, with the sanction of the Medicine, and a treaty was entered into with Mahéga, by which he bound himself with his companions to fight faithfully for the Crows, and to make over to them ne half of his goods concealed in the c che, on condition that they should do everything in their power to recover for him the Great Medicine of the tent, and his baggage now in the hands of the Delawares.

These arrangements and agreements were no sooner completed than they were carried into execution with a speed, order, and noiseless silence peculiar to these roving tribes, whose fate is so often dependent upon the secrecy and celerity of their movements.

While these things were going forward in the Crow camp, Reginald sat by the side of Prairie-bird under the small cedar-tree in front of her tent. Being still somewhat stiff from the wounds and bruises received in the late attack, he gladly availed himself of that pretext for enjoying a few hours of repose in the society of his beloved, while he left the chief care of the defence of the camp to Baptiste and War-Eagle.

His eye wandered occasionally across the valley below, and scanned with an anxious look the opposite hill upon which the dusky figures of the Crows were seen moving to and fro between the lodges and bushes, until it returned to rest upon the lovely countenance of his companion. That countenance, which was now lighted up by the parting rays of the declining sun, beamed with emotions too deep for utterance.

Her love for Reginald was not like the love so often found in the artificial world of society, a mere preference, engendered, perhaps, by fancy, and nurtured by habit, accident, or mere congeniality of tastes, but a single absorbing passion, the intensity of which she trembled to acknowledge even to herself. All the poetry, the enthusiasm, the yearnings of womanly feeling in her nature were gathered into a focus, and nothing but her strong and abiding sense of religion prevented that love from being idolatry.

As her eye fell upon the recent scar upon his forehead, and the sling in which his left arm was enveloped, she remembered that twice already had his blood been shed in her defence, twice had her life been saved at the risk of his own. Tears of delicious gratitude, tears sweeter than any smiles that ever dimpled the cheek of joy began to flow, and half averting her face from her lover, she turned it thoughtfully towards the western horizon.

The orb of the sun had just disappeared behind the rugged and far-distant mountain range, whose towering and snow-clad peaks stood out in clear relief from the deep masses of cloud whose wavy edges still reflected his golden light. A mellowed haze wrapped as in a saffron mantle the nearer hills, whose irregular forms, some rocky and precipitous, others undulating and covered with dense forests of pine and cedar, formed the foreground of the magnificent evening landscape. A single star glimmered palely in the twilight heaven, a forerunner of the thousand glorious lights about to emerge from its *unfathomed vault.* To look up from nature to *nature's God was the habitual process of Prairie-bird's mind, a habit resulting* partly from the fatherly instructions of the Missionary, chiefly from her constant study of the Scriptures amid scenes calculated to impress its lessons most deeply upon her.

Such a scene was that now before her, and as the deepening shadows fell upon mountain, forest, and vale, a holier calm stole over the current of her thoughts, and imparted to her eloquent features an expression in which the sweet consciousness of reciprocated earthly affection was blended with adoring gratitude to Him whose everlasting name is Love.

The earnest and affectionate gaze of Reginald was still riveted upon her countenance, when a gentle sigh fell upon his watchful ear. Taking her hand within his own, he whispered "Is Prairie-bird sad?—Does any sorrow disturb her peace?"

Dropping to the earth those humid eyes so late upraised to heaven, she replied, in a hesitating voice, "Not sad, dear Reginald, but . . . afraid."

"Afraid! dearest; and of what? Nay, blush not, but tell me your cause of fear."

"Afraid of too much happiness, of too much love. I tremble, and doubt whether my thoughts are such as God approves."

"Be not rash nor unjust in self-condemnation," said Reginald, in a chiding tone, while secretly delighted by a confession which his heart interpreted aright; "think you that the Creator who implanted these affections within us, and who has pronounced repeated sanctions and blessings upon the bond of wedded love, think you, dearest, that He can be offended at your love for one to whom you have plighted your troth, and who, albeit in many respects unworthy of such a treasure, has at least the merit of repaying it a hundredfold!"

"Unworthy!" repeated Prairie-bird, in a tone of reproachful tenderness,—other words trembled upon her lips, but the instinct of maidenly reserve checked their utterance, and she was silent.

"Nay, if you like not the word, it shall be unsaid," whispered Reginald, gently pressing the hand which he held within his own; "and my whole future life shall be a constant endeavour to make it untrue. Let me, however, guess at the secret cause of your fear, and of the sigh that escaped you,—you were thinking of your dear fatherly instructor, and were afraid that he would not return?"

"Indeed my thoughts were not of him at the moment," she replied, with earnest simplicity; "nor am I afraid on his account."

"Why is he not yet in the hands of an enemy whose cruelty and treachery are proverbial? What if the Crow chief should, in spite of his solemn promise, refuse to give up his prisoners?"

"It cannot be," she replied gravely; "God will not permit such falsehood."

"You speak," said Reginald, "like one who has studied chiefly your own heart, and the precious book now lying at your side; but even there you may have read that the Almighty sometimes permits falsehood and wickedness to triumph upon earth."

"It is too true," replied Prairie-bird; "yet I feel a strong assurance that our friends will return to us in safety. I cannot tell whence it comes—whether from a dream sent in the watches of the night, or the secret whispers of some mysterious and unseen counsellor, but it brings hope, rest, and comfort to my heart."

"God forbid," said Reginald, passionately,

"that I should say anything likely to banish such sweet guests from so sweet a home. But if the Crow chief should be guilty of this treacherous act of falsehood, I will endeavour to inflict upon him a vengeance so signal, as shall deter him and his tribe from any future repetition of the crime."

"It is lawful," replied the maiden, "to recover our friends by force or device, if they are detained by treachery; but remember, dear Reginald, that vengeance belongs not to our erring and fallen race; if the Upsaroka should sin as you expect, defeat, if you can, his evil schemes, but leave his punishment to the Great Avenger, who can make his latter days loathsome as those of Gehazi, or his death sudden and fearful as that of Ananias and his guilty spouse."

Reginald coloured deeply, for his conscience reminded him that on a late occasion he had used, in a discussion with War-Eagle, the same argument as that now applied with so much force to himself, and he felt ashamed of having forgotten, in the excitement of his own passions, a truth which he had laboured strongly to impress upon another.

"Thanks, dearest monitress," he replied, "for recalling me to my better self; would that you were always by my side to control my impatience and reprove the hastiness of my temper. Nay, I trust ere long that you will be always at my side; your father and instructor will return, and will unite us in those holy bands not to be severed by man. You will then leave the prairie and the tent, and come with me to a home where a second father and a loving sister claim a share in your affection."

"It shall be so," replied Prairie-bird in a low and earnest voice; "read my answer in the language of one who, like myself, was humble and friendless, but who, trusting in her God, found in a strange land a husband and home."

"Nay, read it to me," said Reginald, anticipating her selection; "however beautiful the words may be, your voice will make them fall more sweetly on my ear."

Prairie-bird opened the book, but she looked not on the page, for the words were treasured in her heart; and she repeated in a voice faltering from deep emotion, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

As she concluded these words, she looked up to the face of her betrothed with eyes beaming with truth and affection. The strong man was overcome; he could only utter a deep Amen. The consciousness that the trustful, guileless being now at his side had surrendered to his keeping the ark of her earthly happiness, mingled an awful responsibility with the more tender feelings that possessed his inmost soul; he felt what has been so truly described by a poet out of fashion and out of date,—that

> "The treasures of the deep are not so precious
> As are the concealed comforts of a man
> Locked up in woman's love."

Then did he record a secret and solemn vow that he would guard his precious treasure with a miser's care; the stars began more brightly to twinkle in the sky, the watch-fires emitted through the deepening gloom a clearer ray; and as the head of Prairie-bird lightly rested upon her lover's shoulder, they gave themselves up to the delicious reveries suggested by the hour, the scene, and hearts overcharged with bliss.

The happy pair were suddenly aroused from their waking dream by the sharp crack of a rifle, the flash of which Reginald distinctly saw through the bushes on the side of the hill below them; a bullet whizzed close to his head, and a half-suppressed cry broke from Prairie-bird.

"Speak, love, speak!" he exclaimed in frantic alarm; "speak but one word to tell me you are not hurt!"

"I am not hurt," she replied; "God be praised that you are also unharmed! Nay, dearest, do not break from me." Here the report of fire-arms was again heard, mingled with the shouts and tumult of a sudden fray. "Our friends are on their guard! you are still weak from your late wound! Oh, Reginald, stay! I entreat—I implore!"

But he heard her not; the din of arms and the foul attempt at murder, directed, as he believed, against the life of his betrothed, had awakened the tempest within him; the wounded arm was released from its sling, and, with drawn cutlass in his right hand, he rushed down the steep slope of the hill with the reckless speed of a madman. We will now proceed to explain the cause of this sudden interruption of their *tête-à-tête*.

It has been already mentioned that Besha had been charged with explaining to Mahéga the arrangements and plans adopted at the Upsaroka council. No sooner had he done so, than the Osage chief, finding that the evacuation of the camp was to take place during the night, resolved upon striking, before they withdrew from the neighbourhood, one blow at the foes who had defeated and baffled him.

Too cunning to be deceived by the Crows, or to be misled by the flattery of Besha, he knew that as he had now no more presents to offer, his only chance of retaining any authority or influence with them was by such deeds of daring as should compel them to look up to him as a war-leader. This feeling, stimulated by his thirst for revenge, led him without hesitation to attempt a feat which, if successful, must render him the terror not less of his allies than of his foes.

As soon as the Horse-dealer had left him he summoned his few remaining followers, and informed them that they must prepare to march during the ensuing night; he told them also that he was about to set forth himself on the war-path alone, and all that he required of them was to conceal themselves among the bushes fronting towards the enemy's camp, so as to cover his retreat in case of his being pursued from that quarter, and that he intended to return, if possible, on a horse.

The men listened with silent attention to their leader's orders, and retired without making either comment or reply. Mahéga then stripped himself of every ornament that could attract attention, and threw off his hunting-shirt and leggins, thrusting a brace of small pistols and a long knife into his waist-belt; and with no other covering than a light pair of moccasins on his feet, he stole out of the camp at a point which was not visible from the enemy's quarters.

Availing himself of every ravine and undulation of ground, he made a swift circuit in the distant prairie, and approached the Delaware camp on the north-eastern side, where, as has

been before mentioned, it was protected by a precipitous cliff. He had observed a narrow valley in this direction, not more than half a mile from the base of the rock, to which the white men drove their horses for pasture; and as a view of it was commanded from the height, they were only guarded by a single man, who drove them back in the evening to the camp. The man who happened to be on duty there was a hunter belonging to the band brought out by Pierre, a brave, and somewhat reckless fellow, who had been inured to all the hardships and risks of a mountain trapper's life.

The crafty Osage, having succeeded in obtaining the important advantage of seeing his opponent before he could be himself perceived, directed his movements accordingly. He might, perhaps, have succeeded in creeping near enough to shoot him, and have gained the shelter of his own camp before he could be overtaken; but such was not his purpose. He had determined that the bullet now in his rifle should lodge in the heart of Reginald or War-Eagle, and no other life could satisfy his revenge.

Not more than a hundred paces from the spot where the unconscious sentry sat, with his face towards the Upsaroka camp, the valley made a bend, becoming at the same place narrower and steeper in its banks; thither did Mahéga stealthily creep, and on reaching it found that he was not within sight of his enemy.

After waiting some time, during which he carefully noted every bush and hillock that might be made subservient to his projected plan, he saw feeding towards him a steady old pack-horse, whose scarred back and sides showed that he had carried many a weary burthen over mountain and prairie. The Osage remarked also, that the animal had a long laryette of hide round its neck. As soon as he felt assured that it had passed the bend, and could no longer be seen by the man on guard, he caught the end of the laryette, and led his unresisting quadruped prisoner to a spot further up the valley, where some thick bushes offered him the means of concealing himself. Here he twisted the laryette firmly around the fore-leg of the horse, and ensconcing himself behind the largest of the bushes, patiently awaited the result.

As the shades of evening drew on, the hunter rose to collect and drive his horses to the camp. Having gathered those in the lower part of the valley, he afterwards came in search of those that had strayed beyond the bend. When his eye fell upon the old pack-horse cropping the long grass, and occasionally the younger shoots of the adjacent bushes, he muttered to himself, "The old fool hasn't sense to know summer from winter; there he stands, gnawing the twigs off the bushes, when he might be eating the best grass in the bottom."

As soon as he reached the animal whom he thus apostrophised, he laid down his rifle, in order to free the entangled leg from the laryette. While stooping for this purpose, a slight rustling of leaves caught his ear; and ere he could look round the fierce Osage sprang upon him with the bound of a tiger. The unfortunate man strove to catch up his rifle, but the foot of the giant was upon it, a grasp of iron was upon his throat, and ere he could utter a sound or raise a hand, the knife of the savage was buried in his heart.

Having thus far succeeded in his plan, Mahéga dressed himself from head to foot in the clothes of his victim, taking possession at the same time of his knife and pistols, having first deliberately scalped him, and placed the scalp in his own belt, below the ill-fated hunter's shirt. When thus accoutred and attired, the Osage grinned with satisfaction, and proceeded to the next, and more dangerous portion of his enterprise.

His first step was to select and secure the best horse from those pasturing in the valley, which he bridled with the laryette already mentioned; and having slung the hunter's rifle over his shoulder, he mounted his newly-acquired steed, and began leisurely to drive the others towards the Delaware camp. As soon as he emerged from the valley he came in sight of the enemy's sentries and outposts; but the well-known wolf-skin cap, and elk-skin shirt, attracted no particular attention, and he rode deliberately forward until he reached a huge pine-tree, the shade of whose branches was rendered yet more dark by the deepening gloom of evening. Here he fastened his horse; and leaving the others to find their way as they best might, he struck boldly into the thicket that fringed the base of the hill.

Conscious that he was now in the midst of enemies, and that his life must depend upon his own skill and address, he crept forward up the steep ascent, now stopping to listen for the sound of a footfall, now straining his eyes through the dusky shade, in search of some light or object by which to direct his course. Knowing every inch of the ground, he was soon able to distinguish the angle of the stockade, and at no great distance above it the white tent, partially lighted up by a fire, round which were seated Monsieur Perrot, Pierre, and several others.

As night drew on, and the surrounding scenery became involved in deeper gloom, the watch-fire emitted a stronger light, by which Mahéga caught, at length, a view of Reginald seated by the side of Prairie-bird. All the stormy passions in his breast, jealousy, hatred, and revenge, were kindled at the sight; and as soon as he thought the muzzle of his rifle truly aimed at his rival's heart, he fired. Fortunate was it for Reginald that the light cast by the fire was flickering and uncertain, or that hour had been his last.

The savage, without waiting to see the result of his shot, which had alarmed the hunters and the Delawares patroling near the spot, rushed down the hill towards the tree where he had left his horse. Twice was his path crossed by an enemy; the first he felled with a blow on the head from the discharged rifle, and the second, which was no less a person than honest Baptiste himself, he narrowly missed, in firing a pistol in his face at so near a distance that, although unhurt by the ball, his cheek was singed by the powder.

Completely taken by surprise, the Guide fired into the bushes after the retreating figure of his unknown foe, and then dashed forward in pursuit; but the darkness favoured the escape of the Osage, who never paused nor turned again until he reached the spot where he had fastened the horse; then vaulting on its back, he shouted his insulting war-cry, in a voice that might be heard above all the mingled sounds of pursuit struck his heel into the flank of the captured steed, and, unscathed by any of the bullets that whistled after him, reached the Crow camp in safety.

The Osage warriors looked with some surprise upon their chief in his unusual attire, but he briefly returned their greeting, and proceeded without delay to the lodge of the Upsaroka chief. A fire was burning there, by the light of which he recognised the old man seated in the midst, with his son, White-Bull, on his right and Besha at some distance on his left. Mahéga had by this time thrown off the garments of the slain hunter, which were slung across the horse. Leading the latter forward, until the light of the fire fell upon it and upon himself, he stood a moment in an attitude of haughty and silent expectation. White-Bull and his father raised their eyes in surprise at the sudden appearance of their guest, and in involuntary admiration of his herculean figure, the fine proportions of which were seen to advantage by the ruddy glare of the blazing logs.

"Let Besha tell my brother he is welcome," said the old chief, cautiously; "and let him inquire whence he comes, and what he has to say."

"Mahéga is come," replied the proud Osage, "from a visit to the pale-faces and the Lenapé women. His hands are not empty; the shirt, the leggins, the belt, the head-dress, and the horse of a white hunter he has brought as a present to the Upsaroka chief. If White-Bull will receive the *Medicine-weapon*,* the heart of Mahéga will be glad."

White-Bull and his father accepted the offered presents with every demonstration of satisfaction. The latter, again addressing Besha, desired him thus to speak:

"Mahéga forgets that all his goods are in the hands of his enemies—does he keep nothing for himself?"

The Osage made no reply, but drawing the recent scalp from his belt, and pointing to it, the knife still red with human blood, he smiled scornfully, and strode through the camp back to his own lodge. His purpose was effected; he had succeeded in his daring exploit, and, although uncertain of the result of the shot fired at Reginald, he had regained some of his influence over the Upsaroka chief and his intractable son. Mahéga pondered over these things in his lodge, as he mechanically attached the scalp of his last-killed foe to a thong, on which were already fastened many similar trophies of his former prowess.

His musings were soon disturbed by the voice of Besha, who entered the lodge, bearing a sack of considerable dimensions, which he deposited upon the ground. "Mahéga is a great warrior," said he, greeting the Osage with something of the reluctant courtesy which a terrier shows to a mastiff; "his name will be heard far among the tribes of the Upsaroka nation. The Great Chief wishes to make his Washashe brother a present: three horses stand without the lodge to carry the followers of Mahéga on the path of the bison, or of the Lenapé."

The eye of the chief brightened with fierce pleasure at this announcement, as two of his few remaining men were unhorsed, and he satisfied himself, by going to the door of the lodge, that the horses now presented to him were good and fit for service.

"That is not all," continued the horse-dealer; "White-Bull knows that the medicine-weapon cannot live without food; he has sent me to offer this bag to Mahéga."

As he spoke Besha opened the sack, and exposed to the view of the Osage powder and lead sufficient for fifty or sixty shots, and half a dozen pair of strong moccasins, such as are made by the Crow women for their lords.

"The hand of the Upsaroka is open," said Mahéga; "tell him that his gifts shall not fall upon the ground; the lead shall be buried in the hearts of his enemies."

Besha, having given to the chief a few brief explanations of the hour and the arrangements fixed for the night-march, withdrew, and left him to communicate them to his followers.

We must now return to Reginald Brandon, whom we left engaged in the disagreeable and perilous task of pursuing an unseen enemy down the slope of a steep hill in the dark. His was not, however, a foot or a heart likely to fail him in such an emergency, and, reckless alike of obstacles or of the difficulties in his path, he continued his rapid descent, and soon found himself among the glades and bushes whence the firing had aroused his attention. Advancing with his drawn cutlass still in his hand, he stumbled over something, which he found to be the prostrate form of a man, and in whom he recognised, by his dress, one of his own party. Finding that he could extract from him nothing but broken and muttered sentences about "the devil" and "the darkness," he hastened on until he reached a spot where he heard several voices in earnest conversation; these he found to be War-Eagle, Wingenund, and Baptiste; and he soon gathered from the latter all that he had to tell, which was, that having suddenly heard the crack of a rifle in the camp, and then a man rushing through the bushes in descending the hill, he had thrown himself in the way of the stranger, who, after nearly blinding him by the discharge of a pistol in his face, had darted past him into the thicket below. "I fired after him," continued the honest Guide, "both pistol and rifle, but I scarcely think I hit him, for, on reaching the edge of the timber, I could just distinguish a horseman crossing the prairie at full speed to the Crow camp; 'tis a bad business, but I fear there is worse yet behind."

"How mean you?" inquired Reginald.

"Why, I fear some foul play in our own camp; the fellow who shot the pistol at me was one of our party."

"Impossible!" said Reginald; "I will not believe it."

"Neither would I, if I could help it," replied the Guide; "but dark as it was, I could plainly see the fur-cap and elk-shirt upon him; whoever it was, he joined Mahéga on the prairie, for the Washashe shouted his cursed warwhoop aloud to insult us."

Wingenund here whispered a few words to War-Eagle, who replied, "Right, my young brother, let us visit the posts and the fires, we shall soon see who is missing."

While the chief, with the aid of Pierre and Baptiste, undertook this task, Reginald returned, accompanied by Wingenund, to the spot where he had stumbled over the wounded man. They found him seated in the same place, but the

* At the date of this tale the use of fire-arms was very little known among the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains; and in most of their languages, to this day, the words by which they express "a rifle" signify, usually, "medicine-weapon," "wonderful fire-weapon," fire-tube," &c., &c.

senses had returned, and with the exception of the severe bruises on the head, they were glad to learn that he was uninjured. He could give no account of what had passed further than that already given by Baptiste. He had been prostrated and stunned by a heavy blow from some one descending the hill with great rapidity; he also stated his impression that he had distinguished the dress of a white hunter.

The result of the investigation may of course be anticipated; the unfortunate owner of the wolf-skin cap was suspected of having plotted with Mahéga, and (after aiding him in an attempt to murder Reginald) of having gone off with one of the best horses to the Crow camp. Such was the conjecture of some, and if there were others who guessed more nearly at the truth, their opinions were for the present reserved; it being, however, impossible to make further inquiry until daylight, the different parties retired to their respective quarters, and Reginald again sought the tent to give to Prairie-bird an account of what had passed, and to assure her of his safe return. At the first sound of his voice she came forth, and listened with breathless attention to his brief narration. The watch-fire had been fed with fresh fuel, and its light falling upon her countenance, enabled her lover to see the intense anxiety which it expressed; a handkerchief, hastily folded like a turban, covered her head, and a dark Mexican mantle was thrown over her shoulders; her hand trembled in his, and a slight shudder passed through her frame as he mentioned the name of Mahéga.

"Nay, dearest," said Reginald, "I shall grieve indeed, if the name of that hateful savage hath power so to move and disturb your peace. Fear him not: believe me, we shall yet defeat all his attempts, whether of hidden fraud or open force."

"There is no room, dear Reginald, for thoughts of fear for the future in my heart, 'tis already full, too full, of gratitude for the past; you are again by my side, safe and unhurt. Yet, methinks, I am sadly changed of late! A short time since, the report of the rifle, the arrow's hissing path, brought no terror to my ear, and now I tremble when I hear them! Will you not regret having chosen a coward for your bride?"

"Perhaps I may," said Reginald, "when the thirsty summer-grass regrets being moistened by the dew of heaven; when the watchful mother regrets that she has borne the infant by whose cradle she is seated; when the miser regrets having discovered an unsuspected treasure; and the weary traveller regrets having found a fresh spring amid the burning sands of the desert; then may I perhaps regret having chosen Prairie-bird to be to my thirsting heart its summer-dew, its firstling, its treasure, its fountain of exhaustless joy and love!"

Although it was not the first time that she had received the assurance of his affection, her ear drank it in with delight; the repetitions of Love have for his votaries perpetual freshness and variety.

"How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night!"

So says one of the fairest creations of the Great interpreter of human passion; yet it is *only to each* other that these voices do so sweetly *sound; to others less* interested, their parlance *is apt to seem dull* and monotonous. Neither would a dinner of honey or Guava jelly alone be more nauseous and disappointing to the appetite of a hungry man than a volume filled with love-letters, or love-speeches, to one in search of literary food. Duly impressed with this truth, we will spare any further detail of the conversation that passed between Reginald and his betrothed, and will content ourselves with relating that, after more than one "Good-night!" such as only lovers know, Prairie-bird retired into her tent, with her thoughts so absorbed in one object that she was scarcely conscious of the affectionate attentions of her faithful Lita, or of the watchful care of young Wingenund, who took his accustomed station at the entrance to the outer division of his sister's canvass dwelling.

An hour before the dawn the wakeful youth arose and looked abroad; the pale and expiring fires of the opposite camp were still distinctly visible; but his practised ear missed the usual sounds of Indian life—the hum of men, the cries of children, and the barking of curs. Having learned the use of Reginald's spy-glass, he took it down from the peg on which it was suspended, and examined the opposite hill. As the light of day gradually advanced, and objects became more easily distinguishable, his suspicions became confirmed, and he resolved no longer to delay communicating them to War-Eagle. He found the chief seated at the door of his lodge, in an attitude which he at first mistook for slumber, but it proved to be one of deep meditation; for, on the youth's approach he looked up, and said, in the gentle tone in which he always addressed his beloved brother,

"Wingenund is a-foot before the sun; have his ears or eyes been open during the night?"

"They have," said the youth, gravely; "and the words that he brings to his brother are not good."

"The Wolf-cap hunter is gone to the Upsaroka camp; that is bad news; is there any worse?"

"Wingenund knows nothing of the Wolf-cap hunter; but the Upsaroka camp is like the village of the Lenapé on the prairies of the east, there remains in it neither man, nor woman, nor child!"

War-Eagle sprang upon his feet, and hastily desiring Wingenund to summon Reginald, Baptiste, and Pierre to council, he descended the hill to the spot where his horses were fastened, and throwing himself upon the back of the swiftest, he galloped at full speed towards the opposite camp. As he approached it, he began to suspect that its apparent desertion might be only a manœuvre to draw his party into an ambush, wherefore he wheeled his horse and made a circuit round the base of the hill, at such a distance as to be secure from the arrow or ball of any marksman hidden among the bushes. As he gained a spot whence the expanse of prairie was open to his view towards the south-west, he saw a body of horsemen retreating rapidly in that direction; they were already several miles from the camp, and he rightly conjectured them to be the rear-guard of the retiring enemy.

The main-body had marched early in the night, and only a score of the best mounted had been left to walk up and down by the fires, to talk aloud, and thus to prevent any suspicion of their movements from entering the Delaware camp.

Vexed and disappointed, the chief returned to

his party, which he found in confusion and dismay, from their having just discovered the body of the unfortunate Wolf-cap hunter, one of his companions having visited the valley before mentioned, in search of the missing horse and carvette!

The mystery was now cleared up, and the truth flashed upon them that Mahéga, dressed in the clothes of their slain comrade, had actually come within their posts, and, after a deliberate attempt to shoot Reginald, had singed the beard of Baptiste, knocked down another of their party, stolen one of their best horses, and escaped in triumph to his camp!

It may well be imagined how such a complication of injury and insult aggravated the hatred which they already entertained towards the Osage. Yet were there many among the rough and hardy men present, who could not prevent feeling a secret admiration of his daring and successful exploit.

CHAPTER XLI.

Wingenund devises a Plan for the Liberation of his Friends, and seeks to obtain by Means equally unusual and effective the Co-operation of the one-eyed Horse-dealer.—A further March into the Mountains.—Wingenund pays a Visit to his Friends, and the Latter make acquaintance with a strange Character.

It was about a week after the events related in the preceding chapter, that, in a deep romantic glen, apparently locked in by impassable mountains, there sate a hunter busily engaged in changing the flint of his rifle, it having just missed fire, and thereby lost him a fine chance of killing a bighorn, or mountain sheep; his countenance expressed little of the disappointment which would have been felt by a younger man on such an occasion, and its harsh, coarse features would have led any observer to believe that their possessor was habituated to occupations less generous and harmless than those of the chase.

As he fixed a fresh flint into the lock of his rifle, he hummed, or rather grunted, in a low tone, a kind of chaunt, which was a mixture of half a score different tunes, and as many various dialects, but from the careless deliberation with which he went on with his work, it was easy to perceive that his mind was otherwise occupied.

Whatever might have been his reflections, they were suddenly interrupted by a hand laid upon his shoulder, which made him start as if he had been stung by a serpent. Springing to his feet, and instinctively dropping the muzzle of his rifle to the breast of his unexpected visitor, he exclaimed, after a momentary pause, "Does Wingenund come as a friend or an enemy?"

"Neither," replied the youth, scornfully. "Wingenund has no friendship for a forked tongue; and if he had come as an enemy, Besha would not now have been alive to ask the question; 'twas as easy to shoot him as to touch his shoulder."

"For what then is he come?" inquired the horse-dealer, who, although somewhat abashed at this reproof, was not disposed to endure the tone of superiority assumed towards him by the young Delaware.

"He is come to speak to Besha, and then to return; this is not a place to throw away words and time."

"Indeed it is not, for Wingenund knows that his enemies are within hearing of a rifle shot."

"There may be other rifles nearer than Besha thinks," replied the youth drily. "Wingenund is not a bird; wherever he goes friends can follow him."

The horse-dealer cast an uneasy glance around, and muttered half aloud, "If Wingenund is not a bird, I know not how he came to this place unseen by the Upsaroka scouts, who are abroad in every quarter?"

To this Wingenund deigned no reply, but entered at once upon the business upon which he had come. As he explained his proposal the single eye of his auditor seemed to dilate with unfeigned astonishment, and at its conclusion he shook his head, saying, "It cannot be! the mad spirit has entered my young brother's head. Besha would do much to serve his friends, but this would hold a knife to the cord of his own life!"

"The knife is there already," said the youth, sternly; "Besha has told lies to Netis and to War-Eagle, and unless he makes good his first words, their knife or bullet shall find him on the mountain or in the wood, or in the midst of the Upsaroka camp."

For an instant Besha was tempted to rush upon the bold speaker and trust the issue to his superior strength, but the quiet eye of the young Delaware was fixed upon him with an expression so fearless and resolved, that he involuntarily quailed before it, and as he was endeavouring to frame some further excuse, the youth continued in a tone of voice less stern, "Let Besha's ears be open, it is not yet too late; if he chooses to be friends with Netis, Wingenund can tell him some news that will be good for the person whom he loves best."

"And who may that be?" said the horse-dealer, doubtless surprised at the youth's pretending to a knowledge of his affections.

"Himself," was the brief reply.

The horse-dealer's eye twinkled with a comic expression, and a broad grin sat upon his countenance. "Supposing that my young brother's words are true, what is the good news that he has to tell?"

"If the white prisoners are given back unhurt to their friends, the lodge of Besha shall be more full of gifts than any lodge on the banks of the great southern river;* if not, the mountain wolves shall gnaw his bones before the change of another moon: let him choose for himself."

"My brother's words are big," replied the horse-dealer, striving to overcome the effect produced upon him by the threat of the Delaware youth. "The tongues of women are very brave; if the Washashe tell the truth, not many summers have passed since the Lenapé were a woman-people."

The blood of the young chief boiled within him at this insulting allusion to an era in the history of his tribe which has already been explained to the reader, and had he followed his first fierce impulse he would have instantly avenged the affront in the blood of the speaker, but he never lost sight of the object for which he had so long sought an interview with the horse-dealer, wherefore he controlled his rising passion, and replied, "Wingenund comes with this message from those who not many days ago drove the Washashe and the Upsaroka from

* The Arkansas

their strong camp: Besha may judge whether they are women or warriors."

The horse-dealer felt, if he did not own, the justice of the reproof; he knew also that the greater portion of the coveted goods were in the possession of War-Eagle's party, and he was willing enough to conciliate them, provided he could ensure a safe retreat from the anger of the Crows, in the event of his intrigue being discovered by them.

Moved by these considerations, he said, in an undecided tone, "My young brother must not forget that the edge of the knife is on the cord of his life; if Besha agrees to his proposal, and the Crows discover him, he will be torn in pieces like a wounded elk among wolves."

"The life of Wingenund is like the breath of the mountain breeze," answered the youth; "it is in the hands of the Great Spirit, to move and send it whither he pleases. Let Besha taste this black water," he added, drawing from his belt a small bottle, "it is very wonderful."

The horse-dealer took the phial, which contained a strong, and not very palatable mixture, which had been borrowed by Wingenund from his sister's chest of medicine; but he declined tasting it, shaking his head in a manner that gave the youth to understand that he suspected something of a hurtful or poisonous nature.

"Let not Besha be afraid," said the youth, scornfully; "the tomahawk and the rifle are the death-weapons of the Lenapé, they war not with bad-waters!" and as he spoke he drank a portion of the dark and distasteful liquid.

It would now have been held, according to Indian custom, an act of unpardonable cowardice in Besha had he any longer hesitated to taste the pledge, and whatever doubts or scruples he might in secret have entertained, he concealed them, and drank off the remaining contents of the phial.

As soon as he had swallowed them, the youth, pointing up to the sky, said, with much solemnity, "Now Wingenund and Besha are before the Great Spirit, and they must beware what they do. This dark-water was given into their hands by the Medicine of the white tent; it is made up by Prairie-bird from a thousand unknown herbs; it is harmless to the good, but it is poison to the forked tongue! Has Besha ever heard of the sickness which makes the skin like a honey-comb; which spares neither woman, warrior, nor child; and in the course of half a moon turns a powerful tribe into a feeble and exhausted band?"

"He *has* heard of it," replied the horse-dealer, trembling from head to foot at this allusion to that *fell disease*,* which had already begun its fearful ravages among the Indian nations, and has since fulfilled to the very letter the description given of it by the Delaware youth. Its origin and causes were unknown, its cure beyond their skill; it is not therefore to be wondered at if they looked upon it with a mysterious dread.

"Yes," continued Wingenund, "if truth is on the lips and in the heart of Besha, the medicine-water will be good for him and make him strong. If he thinks of falsehood, and lies spring up in his heart, but he overcomes the bad spirit within, and treads it under his foot, then will the medicine-water give him pain for a short time, but he will recover and be stronger than before; and if his lips and heart continue full of deceit, diseases *and sores shall come so thick* upon his skin that he shall die among these rocks, the hungry wolf and the turkey-buzzard shall refuse to come near the polluted carcase."

Such, or nearly such, was the warning threat which the youth held forth in the bold and figurative language of his tribe; and although Besha could not with justice be called a coward, and was superior to many of the superstitions of the Indian nations, still he had heard such well-authenticated accounts of the miraculous power of the Great Medicine of the tent, that the words of Wingenund produced all, and more than all, the effect he had anticipated.

"It shall be done," said Besha in a subdued tone; "let Wingenund tell Ontipa that the lips and the heart of her friend will be true, and let him desire her to speak to the Great Spirit, that the medicine-water may not hurt him. Besha will be true; if the Crows discover and kill Wingenund, the hands of Besha shall be clear of his blood."

"Let the words of Wingenund remain in Besha's ears; let his tongue and his path be straight, and the hearts and hands of the Lenapé will be open to him. At two hours after nightfall* Wingenund will be here again."

So saying, the youth turned, and darting through some low bushes, clambered up the steep and rocky bed of a mountain-torrent with the activity of a mountain-cat.

Besha followed with his eyes the light form of the young Delaware, until it disappeared behind a tall cliff that projected so far across the narrow gorge as completely to hide its existence from the observation of any one traversing the valley, while its rugged and precipitous front might have deterred the boldest hunter from attempting the passage. The horse-dealer then shouldered his rifle, and returned slowly to the Crow camp, distant about a mile, revolving as he went along various schemes for ensuring the gratitude of the Delawares, without forfeiting the friendship of those with whom he was now allied.

Wingenund had rightly estimated the probable nature and quality of his reflections, and sundry sharp twitches which he felt in his stomach served to remind him of the dangerous liquid which it contained. Warned by these sensations, he made up his mind to obey the Great Medicine of the tent, and for the present, at least, to be faithful to the promise made to Wingenund.

The Delaware youth pursued his way up the rough and craggy gorge until he reached a cave that he had noticed on his descent as likely to afford shelter and a secure retreat. Here he stopped; and ensconcing himself in a dark recess, whence he could, without being himself discovered, see any one passing before the aperture, he threw himself on the ground, and drawing from his belt a few slices of dried bison-meat, he made his frugal meal, and quenched his thirst from a streamlet that trickled down the face of the rock behind him. While resting himself, he indulged in hopes and reveries suited to his enthusiastic nature; he was now engaged

* *Small-pox*

* It has before been mentioned that the division and notation of time vary extremely in the Indian tribes; those who have had much commerce with the Whites have coined words answering to what we denominate hours; but the tribes of the Far-western prairies usually express the successive periods of the night by resting the cheek upon the hand in a recumbent posture, and then, holding up the fore-finger and thumb in the form of a crescent, they shew, by the number of motions which they make in pointing to the sky, the number of hours or watches after nightfall which they wish to indicate.

in an enterprise such as he had often heard recorded in the songs of the Lenape warriors; he was about to trust himself alone in the midst of a hostile camp, and to risk his life for the liberation of his early benefactor and the friend of his adopted brother; he felt the spirit of his fathers stir within his breast.

"If I escape," said he to himself, "they shall escape with me; and if I die, I will not die alone, and the name of Wingenund shall not be forgotten among the warriors of his tribe."

In these and similar meditations he beguiled the hours until darkness overspread the earth, and the time of the appointed rendezvous drew nigh; then, once more emerging from the cave, he picked his way cautiously among the rocks, and at length found himself at the spot where he had parted from Besha. Having purposely concealed his rifle in the cave, he was now armed only with a knife and a small pistol, which he carried in his belt.

The night was cold and boisterous; dark clouds hung around the mountain-peaks, and chased each other in rapid succession over the disc of the moon, while a fitful gust of wind swept down the rocky glens, whistling as they passed among the branches of the scathed pines which were thinly scattered in that wild and desolate region.

He had not waited long when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and straining his keen sight to its utmost power, he recognised Besha, who came not alone, but accompanied by another man.

Although this was an addition to the company that he did not expect, the youth came fearlessly forward, his quick apprehension suggesting to him that if treachery had been intended the horse-dealer's companion would have been concealed. After exchanging a sign of recognition, Wingenund led the way to a deep recess which he had noted in a rock at no great distance, where they collected and kindled a few sticks of withered juniper and sage, which supplied them with warmth and light without rendering the place of their colloquy visible from the valley below.

By the light of the fire Wingenund observed with surprise that the horse-dealer's companion, a lad of nearly his own size and stature, had only one eye, the cavity of the other being covered with a patch of cloth; his complexion was of a hue so swarthy, that it evidently contained an admixture of the negro race and his hair, though not woolly, was coarse long, and matted, differing entirely in its texture from that of the tribes of purely Indian blood. He was wrapped in a tattered blanket, and stood apart, like one conscious of his inferiority of station. To account for his appearance, without entering at length into the explanations given by the horse-dealer to Wingenund, it will be sufficient to state that the latter had proposed to enter the Crow camp in a female dress, and to find an opportunity, as an inmate of his lodge, for communicating with Paul Müller and Ethelston.

As soon as Besha once made up his mind to forward the scheme, he resolved to do so with as little risk of discovery as possible. Happening to have in his lodge a slave, a captive taken in a horse-stealing skirmish among the Comanches, who was nearly the same age as Wingenund, he thought that the youth might personate him more easily than he could imitate the gait and *appearance of a woman.*

Many were the jokes among the Crows about the one-eyed Besha, and his one-eyed slave. The latter had lost his eye by the point of an arrow, in the same skirmish which threw him into Besha's power; and being a cunning and dexterous lad, he soon grew into favour with his new master, who frequently employed him as a spy, and found him extremely useful in stealing, marking, and disguising horses for him.

Wingenund saw at once the drift of Besha's project, and they lost no time in carrying it into effect. The exchange of dress was made in a few seconds, and the horse-dealer then drew from his pouch a small bladder containing ointment, with which he stained the youth's hands and face, fastening at the same time a patch over his left eye. Wingenund then desired Besha to walk up and down, and speak with the lad, that he might carefully note his movements, and the intonation of his voice. This observation he continued for some time, until he thought himself tolerably perfect in his lesson. There remained, however, one point on which he still felt himself very insecure against detection. On his explaining this to Besha, the latter grinned, and drawing from under his vest a head-dress of false hair, ragged and matted as that of his slave, he placed it on the head of Wingenund. The youth felt his disguise was now complete; and retaining his own knife and small pistol in his belt, threw the tattered blanket over his shoulder, and prepared to accompany Besha to his lodge.

The latter having instructed the slave to keep himself concealed among the rocks for a few days, and having provided him with a small bag of provisions, returned slowly towards the Crow camp, giving to his young companion by the way such hints as he deemed necessary for his safety. Fortunately for Wingenund, the lad whom he personated was known by the Crows to be ignorant of their language, so there was no great risk of his being betrayed by his speech.

As they picked their way slowly along the base of the rugged hills which frowned over the valley, they came to a spot where a few stunted pines threw a darker shadow across their path. To one of these was attached a horse, which Wingenund unfastened by desire of Besha, and led it after him by the halter.

As they reached the outposts of the camp Besha was addressed by several of the sentries, to whom he explained his night expedition, by informing them that he had been with his slave to recover a horse that had strayed. They were perfectly satisfied with this explanation, it being of very frequent occurrence that both master and man returned by day and by night with horses that they had "recovered;" the latter word being in the Crow dialect almost, if not quite, synonymous with "stolen."

The lodge of Besha was pitched next to that of White-Bull, in which Ethelston and Paul Müller were confined. His entrance caused no disturbance among its slumbering inmates; and Wingenund, fore-armed with the requisite local information, tied up the horse beside its fellows; and nestling himself into his allotted corner, laid himself down to rest as composedly as if he had been in his usual quarters in the outer division of his sister's tent.

While Wingenund was thus carrying his project into effect, his friends fulfilled the intention they had formed of marching further into the mountains.

"Dear Prairie-bird!" said Reginald, as they

walked together in front of her tent, "I fear you must be much fatigued by this last march. I never could have believed that a horse, bearing a female rider, could have crossed that rocky pass by which we entered this valley."

"The horse deserves more praise than the rider, Reginald; and Nekimi seemed quite aware that his master attached a higher price to his burthen than it was worth, for he put his feet so safely and gently down, that I need not have feared his slipping, even had he not been led by one yet more gentle and careful than himself."

"It was, however, a severe trial, Prairie-bird," replied her lover; "for you remember that Lita's mule stumbled, and nearly fell with her over that fearful precipice! but Nekimi is unmatched for speed and sureness of foot, and is of so generous and affectionate a nature that I love him more than I ever thought I could have loved a quadruped. When we return to Mooshanne, he shall be repaid for all his faithful service; warm shall be his stable, soft his litter, and his beloved mistress shall sometimes give him corn with her own fair hand, in remembrance of these days of hardships!"

At the mention of his home, the cheek of Prairie-bird coloured with an emotion which that subject never failed to excite. Reginald observed it, and said to her, in a half-jesting tone, "Confess now, dearest, have you not a longing desire to see that home of which I have so often spoken to you?"

"It appears to me so like a dream, that I scarcely dare let my thoughts dwell upon it! But your sister, of whom Wingenund told me so much, I hope she will love me?"

Reginald bent his dark eyes upon her countenance with an expression that said, as plainly as words could speak it, "How could any one see thee, and fail to love thee!" Then turning the conversation to Wingenund, he replied, "Two days have now elapsed since your young brother went upon his dangerous expedition; I begin to feel most anxious for his safety."

"With grief I saw him go, for even if he succeeds in seeing and speaking with the Black Father, I cannot tell what advantage will come from it."

"They may perhaps devise some scheme for escape, and will at all events be comforted by the assurance that their friends are near and watchful. Three several times on the march hither had we made our plans for attacking the camp, and rescuing them, but the hateful Mahéga was always on his guard, and had posted himself in such a manner that we could not approach without incurring severe loss. War-Eagle has himself owned that the Osage has conducted this retreat with wonderful skill. What a pity that so great a villain should possess such high qualities!"

"If he were not in the camp of the Crows," said Prairie-bird, "my beloved father, and your friend would have been set free long ago; cruelty and revenge are his pleasures, and his hand is ever ready to shed blood."

"He will doubtless do all in his power to prevent their liberation; and if his malignant eye should detect the presence of Wingenund, he would represent the brave youth as a spy, and urge the Crows to destroy him."

"I trust much to Wingenund's skill, but more, *oh! how much more, to the protection of Him, at whose word the strongest bars and bolts are broken, and the fetters of iron fall from the limbs of the captive.*"

"What a strength and support must it be to you, dearest Prairie-bird, thus habitually to look up to heaven amid all the trials and troubles of earth!"

"How would it be possible to do otherwise?" she replied, looking up in his face with an expression of innocent surprise. "Can any one look upon the flowers of the prairie, the beauty of the swift antelope, the shade of the valleys, the hills and snow-clad mountains, the sun, the moon, and the thousand thousand worlds above, and yet not worship Him who framed them?"

"I grant you, dearest," he replied, "that no reasonable being could consider those things without experiencing the emotions that you describe, yet many, very many, will not consider them; still fewer are there who refer the thoughts, actions, and events of daily life to an ever-present, overruling Providence."

"Surely they can never have read this book," she said, pointing to the volume which was her constant companion; "or they must feel ever grateful for past mercies, present benefits, and the blessed promises of the future revealed in it!"

For a moment Reginald cast his eyes upon the ground, conscience reminding him of many occasions on which he had been led by temptation and carelessness to wander from those ordinances and precepts of religion which he respected and approved; at length he replied, "True, my beloved, but the human heart is a treacherous guide, and often betrays into errors which reason and revelation would alike condemn."

"It may be so among the cities and crowded haunts of men, of which I know nothing beyond what I have read, and what the Black Father has taught me; yet I cannot understand how a loving heart can be, in such cases, a treacherous guide. Is it not sweet to serve one whom we love on earth, to think of him, to bless him, to follow where he points the way, to afford him pleasure, to fulfil his wishes even before they are expressed! If such feelings be sweet and natural towards one frail and imperfect as ourselves, why should the heart refuse to entertain them towards the one perfect Being, our ever-present Benefactor, the Fountain of Love?"

Again Reginald was silent, the impassioned eloquence of her eyes told him how her heart overflowed with feelings but faintly shadowed in her simple language; and he desired rather to share than to shake her creed. Why should he tell her, that in spite of all the incentives of hope and gratitude, in spite of all the arguments of reason and the truths of revelation, the great majority of the so-called Christian world pursued their daily course of business or amusement as if the present were the substance of life, and Eternity a dream? Reginald felt his own heart softened, purified, and exalted by communion with the gentle being at his side; the cares and troubles of life might perhaps disturb at some future time the current of her lot, but her faith was built upon a Rock that would not be shaken, and his spirit already sympathizing with hers, experienced a new and delightful sensation of happiness.

He might have indulged longer in this blissful reverie, had not his ear caught the sound of an approaching footstep; he turned quickly, and recognising the light form of Wingenund, exclaimed, "See, Prairie-bird, our dear young brother safely returned! May all your other hopeful anticipations be as happily realized! Speak, Wingenund; let us hear how you have sped in your difficult and dangerous mission?"

Instead of giving the youth's narrative in his own words, we will resume the thread of his story where we left it, being thus enabled to relate various particulars which his modesty induced him to omit.

At the first dawn of day he looked round the horse-dealer's lodge, and made a survey of its inmates. In the centre lay Besha himself, and by his side a squaw from one of the southern tribes, who had been the companion of his rambles and expeditions for many years. Beyond them there slept, or seemed to sleep, a youth, whose appearance indicated that he also belonged to a southern clime, and that some Mexican blood ran in his veins; his features were finely formed, his complexion darker than that of a northern Indian, and a short mustachio began to shade his upper lip; his eyes were small, but piercing, and black as jet, and scarcely was the light sufficient to render distinguishable the objects in the lodge ere his quick gaze fell upon Wingenund, with an expression that convinced the latter that the plot had been confided to him. These were the only inmates of the lodge, which was filled with various indications of its owner's success in trade, packages and bales being piled therein to a considerable height.

Agreeably to the plan preconcerted by Besha, his wife invited Bending-willow to come to her in the course of the morning; and, on her arrival, set before her some cakes of maize, sweetened with sugar,—a luxury equally new and agreeable to the Upsaroka bride. Further civilities beyond those interchangeable by signs were precluded between them, by the circumstance of their being each entirely ignorant of the other's language; but the offering of a string of blue beads after the cakes completed the triumph of the hostess in the good graces of her guest.

Besha did not lose this favourable opportunity for calling the attention of the latter to the subject of the prisoners, in whose behalf he expressed a hope that she would use her best exertions.

Bending-willow smiled, and said that she was a woman, and had no power in the council of the tribe.

The crafty horse-dealer saw at a glance how the assertion was belied by the smile, and replied,

"When White-Bull speaks, the braves listen: when Bending-willow speaks, does not White-Bull listen too?"

The Upsaroka beauty looked down and counted the beads upon her new bracelet, with an expression of countenance which encouraged Besha to proceed. "These white men are of no use in the Upsaroka camp: they eat and drink, and kill no game. If they are sent back to their own people, the lodge of White-Bull will be full of presents, and the women will say, 'Look at Bending-willow; she is dressed like the wife of a great chief!"

By these, and similar arguments, the Crow bride was easily induced to connive at the plot laid for the liberation of the prisoners. Being a good-natured creature, and feeling that the kindness of Prairie-bird to her had been ill-requited, she was the more willing to favour the white people, and only held Besha to the promise that in contriving their escape no injury should be done to the person or property of any of her tribe.

With the assistance of Bending-willow, Wingenund found several opportunities of conversing with Ethelston and the Black Father; but the camp was so strictly guarded that they could not devise any plan that seemed to promise success, while a failure was sure to bring upon them more rigid confinement, if not a severer and more summary punishment. Wingenund was authorised by Besha to comfort them with the assurance that they had a true friend in White-Bull's bride, and that they were quite safe from the malignant designs of Mahéga. On the other hand, the horse-dealer positively refused, under present circumstances, to incur the risk of aiding their escape while the position of the camp was so unfavourable for it, and the Crow sentries were kept so much on the alert by the immediate vicinity of War-Eagle's party.

Under these circumstances, the youth had slipped away by night to consult with his friends whether the liberation of the prisoners should be attempted by force, or whether it might not be more advisable to throw the Crows off their guard by discontinuing the pursuit, and leaving it to the ingenuity of Wingenund to devise a plan for their escape.

These two alternatives having been duly discussed in council, it was almost unanimously agreed to adopt the latter; and Wingenund prepared again to return to his perilous post, having received from War-Eagle, Reginald, and Prairie-bird the praises which his skill and enterprise had so well deserved.

He did not forget to take with him a small supply of beads and trinkets, which he concealed in his belt, and which were destined to secure the continued favour of Bending-willow.

As soon as he was gone, War-Eagle proposed that the party should quit their present station in search of one where they might be more likely to fall in with deer and bison, as meat was becoming very scarce in the camp; and a scout, sent out on the preceding day, had returned with a report that he had found, at the distance of half a day's march, a large and fertile valley, watered by a fine stream, and abounding in materials for fuel. This last consideration was of itself highly important, for the Crows had gathered every dry bush and stick from the barren glen in which they were now encamped; and the utmost exertions of the indefatigable Perrot scarcely enabled him to provide a sufficiency for cooking the necessary provisions; while the coldness of the atmosphere, especially at night, rendered the absence of fire a privation more than ordinarily severe.

The counsel of War-Eagle was therefore adopted without delay, it having been agreed that two of the most experienced men, the one a Delaware and the other a white hunter, should hover around the Crow camp, and communicate to the main body, from time to time, their movements and proceedings.

Having been supplied with an extra blanket, and a few pounds of dried meat and parched corn, these two hardy fellows saw their comrades depart without the least apparent concern, and soon afterwards withdrew to a sheltered and more elevated spot, whence they could, without being perceived, command a distant view of the Crow camp.

Following the steps of the scouts, War-Eagle led his party to a part of the valley where a huge rent or fissure in the side of the mountain rendered the ascent practicable for the horses. It was, however, a wild and rugged scene, and a fitting entrance to the vast pile of mountains,

that showed their towering peaks far to the westward.

Prairie-bird was mounted upon Nekimi, and Reginald walked by her side, his hand ever ready to aid and guide him among the huge stones, which in some places obstructed the path.

Never had velvet lawn, or flower-embroidered vale, seemed to our hero half so smooth and pleasant as did that rocky pass. At every turn some new feature of grandeur arrested the attention of Prairie-bird, who expressed her admiration in language which was a strange mixture of natural eloquence and poetry, and which sounded to his ears more musical than "Apollo's lute."

What struck him as most remarkable was, that, whether in speaking of the magnificent scenery around, or of the more minute objects which fell under her observation, her spirit was so imbued with Scripture, that she constantly clothed her ideas in its phraseology, without being conscious of so doing.

Thus, when in crossing the valley they passed by some ant-hills, and, in ascending the opposite height, saw here and there a mountain-rabbit nibbling the short moss that overspread the bed of rock, Reginald directed her attention to them, saying, "See, Prairie-bird, even in this desolate wilderness these insect-millions have built them a city, and the rabbit skips and feasts as merrily as in more fertile regions."

"True, dear Reginald," she replied, "therefore did the wise man say in days of old, 'The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer: the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.'"

A little further onward, the pass was overhung by an enormous cliff, from the top of which a bighorn looked down upon the party below, the long beard of the mountain-goat streaming in the wind. One of the hunters fired at it, but the harmless bullet glanced from the face of the cliff, while amid the echoes repeated and prolonged by the surrounding heights, the bighorn sprang from rock to rock across the yawning chasms by which they were divided, as lightly as the forest squirrel leaps from a branch of the spreading oak to that of the neighbouring elm.

Reginald watched the animal's progress, and called the attention of Prairie-bird to the surprising swiftness and activity with which it held on its perilous course.

When at length it disappeared behind the angle of an abrupt precipice, she said, "Does it not call to your mind the description given of the wild-ass of the East, in the Book of Job, 'Who hath sent out the wild-ass free? or who hath loosened the band of the wild-ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwelling? He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.' Tell me, Reginald," continued the maiden, after a momentary pause, "can the creature here described be the same dull patient animal that I have often seen bearing the packs of the Mexican traders?"

"The same, I believe, dearest, in its origin, and its place in natural history, but widely different in its habits and powers, if we may credit the narratives of travellers, whether modern or ancient. I remember reading a most spirited description of this same anima in the account given by the eminent historian* of the expedition of the younger Cyrus, who relates that the herds of them found near the banks of the Euphrates surpassed the swiftest horses in speed, and were neither to be tamed nor approached without the greatest difficulty; and in later times they have been described as abounding in the wildest regions of Persia and Tartary, where their flesh is considered one of the greatest delicacies at the table of the hunter, and even at that of the prince. In order to distinguish this animal from its humble and degraded kindred in the West, it has been dignified by the name of the Onager."

The conversation was here interrupted by a sudden halt in the line of march, and Reginald heard the sound of numerous voices towards the front as of men speaking under surprise and excitement. When he advanced, with Prairie-bird at his side, they made way for him to pass until he reached the front, where he found War-Eagle holding by a leathern thong the most singular-looking creature that he had ever beheld. It bore in some respects the semblance of a human being, but the extreme lowness of its stature, the matted hair by which it was covered, the length of the finger nails, and the smallness of the deep-set eyes made it almost a matter of doubt whether it did not rather belong to the monkey tribe.

This was, however, soon dispelled by Pierre, who recognised in the diminutive and terrified creature one of the race known to mountain-hunters under the name of Root-diggers. They are the most abject and wretched of all the Indian tribes, living in caves and holes, and supporting their miserable existence upon such animals as they can catch, in toils of the simplest kind, and by grubbing and digging for roots such as no other human being could eat or digest. The one now taken by the Delawares had been engaged in the latter occupation when he first saw them approach, and he fled immediately towards the rocks. Had he been followed by an eye less sure, and a foot less fleet than that of War-Eagle, he might have escaped, for, despite his uncouth appearance, he was nimble as a mountain-cat, but the Delaware chief overlook and secured him; and in spite of all the endeavours made to reassure him, the unfortunate Root-digger now looked about him as if he expected every moment to be his last. Beads, trinkets, and shreds of bright-coloured cloth were all held up to him in turn, but were left unnoticed, and his deep twinkling eyes roved incessantly from one to another of the bystanders with an expression of the most intense alarm.

"Are they always thus fearful and intractable?" inquired Reginald of the Canadian hunter.

"Not always," replied Pierre; "but the Crows, and Black-feet, and white men too, generally treat them worse than dogs whenever they find them; that is not often, for they always hide among rocks and stones, and seldom come down so low in the valleys. I never saw one in this region before."

"Prairie-bird," said Reginald, in a whisper to the maiden, "speak to the poor creature a few words of comfort. Were he shy, suspicious, and wild as a wolf, that voice would subdue and dispel his apprehensions."

* Xenophon.

"The sweetness of the voice lies in the hearer's partial ear," replied Prairie-bird, blushing deeply; "but I will do your bidding to the best of my power; and if I mistake not the poor creature's symptoms, I think I can find a means to relieve them."

So saying, and leaping lightly from her horse, the maiden took from one of the packs a piece of baked maize-cake, and a slice of dried bison-meat. Carrying these in her hand, she approached the Root-digger, and motioning to the bystanders to retire to some distance, she deliberately untied the thong by which he had been fastened, and placing the food before him, made signs that he should eat. At first the uncouth being gazed upon her as if he could or would not understand her meaning; but she spoke to him in the soft Delaware tongue, and eating a morsel of the cake, repeated the signal that he should eat with her. Whether overcome by the gentleness of her manner, or by the cravings of hunger, the savage no longer resisted, but devoured with ravenous haste the food which she had set before him. Prairie-bird smiled at the success of her attempt, which so far encouraged her, that she again offered the several presents which he had before rejected, and which he now accepted, turning them over and over in his hand, and inspecting them with childish curiosity.

Reginald looked on with gratified pride, saying within himself, "I knew that nothing could resist the winning tones of that voice!

> 'Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
> But musie for the time doth change his nature;'

and where is there music like the voice of Prairie-bird?"

CHAPTER XLII.

The Root-digger makes Friends with the Party.—An Adventure with a grizzly Bear.—The Conduct of War-Eagle.

No sooner had Prairie-bird gained the confidence of the Root-digger, than War-Eagle, Reginald, and the other chief hunters, approached him with signs of amity and friendship; nevertheless, he continued shy and suspicious, still refusing to receive either food or present from any hand excepting that of the maiden. They were obliged, therefore, to make her their interpreter, and to endeavour, through her, to acquire the information of which they were in want respecting the scarcity or abundance of deer and bison in the neighbourhood.

In the discharge of this office, Prairie-bird discovered so much natural quickness, and at the same time so complete a knowledge of the Indian language of signs, that Reginald looked on with the most intense interest while the maiden, whose beauty was so strongly contrasted with the hideous face and figure of the mountain dwarf, maintained with him a conversation of some length, in the course of which she learned that there were few, if any bison in the neighbourhood, but that the argali, or mountain sheep, and deer of several kinds, were to be found at no great distance. She succeeded also, at length, in so far disarming his suspicions, that he agreed to act as guide to Baptiste and Reginald in pursuit of game, and to return with them to reap the reward of his trouble in further presents from the hand of Prairie-bird.

The sturdy back-woodsman did not seem to place much confidence in the fidelity of his new acquaintance, and bluntly observed to Pierre, "For sure, I never saw an uglier critter, and his eyes roll from side to side with an under look that I don't half like; perhaps he'll lead us into some ambush of Upsarokas, or other mountain Ingians, rather than to a herd of deer."

"You need not be afraid, Baptiste," replied his brother hunter, laughing; "these poor Root-diggers are harmless and honest in their own miserable way. They are said to belong to the Shoshonies, or Snake-tribe, and are the best of all the Ingians hereabouts; not such fighting devils as the Black-feet, nor such thieves as the Crows, but friendly to the Whites. This poor critter has been digging for roots many a long day with that sharpened flint, which you see in his hand. After you have started on your hunting trip, make him a present of a good knife. I have watched his eyes roving from belt to belt; he would give his ears for one, and yet is too frightened to ask for it."

"Thanks for the hint, Pierre," said his companion, looking carefully to the priming of his rifle; "thanks for the hint. I will carry a spare one with me on purpose; and in case we should fall in with a fat herd, do you, friend War-Eagle, give us the company of one of your stoutest men, that he may assist in bringing in enough meat for the party."

On hearing these words, Prairie-bird inquired of the Root-digger, by signs, whether one of the mules could not go over the hunting-ground. The savage looked first at the animal, then at the fair speaker, and then, with a grin, gave a most decided indication of a negative.

The preparations for the hunt were soon made. Prairie-bird urged Reginald, in a low voice, not to remain too long absent, a command which he faithfully promised to obey; and just as he was about to set forth, he led her up to the chief, and said, "War-Eagle will take care of his sister?"

The Indian's proud heart was gratified by this simple proof of his friend's unbounded confidence; he saw that no jealousy, no doubt of his victory over self, lurked in the breast of Reginald, and he replied, "While War-Eagle has life to protect her, Olitipa shall be safe as in the lodge of Tamenund."

Reginald turned and followed Baptiste and the Root-digger, who had already taken their way up the valley, accompanied by the Delaware selected to aid in carrying home the anticipated booty.

Leaving them to toil up one rocky steep after another, wondering at the enduring agility of the Shoshonie dwarf, who seemed almost as active and sure-footed as one of the mountain-goats of which they were in search, we will return to the valley where War-Eagle's camp was posted, which formed, as we have before noticed, a pleasing contrast to the savage scenery around. The stream that flowed through its centre fresh from the snowy bosom of the mountain, was cool and clear as crystal, and the shade of the trees which grew along its banks was delightfully refreshing after the fatigues of a summer march, even in a region the elevation of which rendered the atmosphere extremely cold before the rising and after the setting of the sun. Prairie-bird felt an irresistible desire to stroll by the banks of this stream,—a desire that was no sooner mentioned by Lita to War-Eagle than he at once assented, assuring her that she might do so in safety, as his scouts were on the look-out both above and below in the valley, so that no enemy

could approach unperceived. At the same time he gave instructions in the camp that none of the men should wander to that quarter, in order that it might be left altogether undisturbed.

Shortly afterwards Prairie-bird set forth, taking in her hand a moccasin, which she was ornamenting with stained quills for the foot of Reginald, and accompanied by her faithful Lita, who bore upon her head a bundle containing various articles belonging to her mistress and to herself, on which she was about to exercise her talents as a laundress.

They had pursued their respective avocations for several hours without interruption, when on a sudden they heard the report of a rifle and the voice of a man shouting, as if engaged in the pursuit of game. This was an occurrence to which both were so much accustomed, that they paid at first little attention to it; but they felt some alarm when they saw one of their party, a white hunter, coming towards them as if running for his life. Before reaching the spot where they were seated, he threw his rifle upon the ground, and climbed into a tree; immediately afterwards a young male, not full grown, of the species called the grizzly or rocky mountain bear came up, limping as if wounded by the rifle so lately discharged, and missing the object that he had been following, looked around him, howling with mingled rage and pain. At length he caught sight of Prairie-bird and her companion; and setting up a more loud and angry howl, trotted towards them. Unfortunately, the spot to which they had retired was a narrow strip of wooded ground, projecting into a curve of the stream above-mentioned, and they could not retreat towards the camp without approaching yet nearer to the wounded bear. There was no time for reflection; and in the sudden emergency, Prairie-bird hesitated whether she should not adopt the desperate alternative of throwing herself into the water, in hopes that the stream might carry her out of the reach of danger.

At this crisis the crack of a rifle was heard, and the young bear fell, but again rose and struggled forward, as if determined not to be disappointed of its prey. Seeing the imminent danger of the woman, the hunter who had climbed the tree dropped lightly to the ground, and catching up his rifle, attacked the half-exhausted animal, which still retained sufficient strength to render too near an approach extremely dangerous. War-Eagle, for he it was who had fired the last opportune shot, now sprang forward from the bushes, reloading his rifle as he came, in order to decide the issue of the conflict, when a loud shriek from Lita reached his ear; and on turning round he beheld the dam of the wounded cub, a she-bear of enormous bulk, trotting rapidly forward to the scene of action; the hunter was so much engaged in dealing blow after blow with the butt of his rifle, that he had noticed neither her approach nor the warning shout of War-Eagle, when one stroke from her terrible paw struck him bleeding and senseless to the ground. For an instant she smelt and moaned over her dying offspring; then, as if attracted by the female dress, pursued her way with redoubled speed and fury towards the spot where Lita clung, with speechless terror, to the arm of her mistress. The latter, although fully alive to the imminency of the peril, lost not her composure *at this trying moment.* Breathing a short prayer *to Heaven for support* and protection, she fixed her eyes upon War-Eagle, as if conscious that the only human possibility of safety now lay in his courage and devotion.

Then it was that the Indian chief evinced the high and heroic properties of his character; for although every second brought the infuriated brute near and more near to her who had been from youth his heart's dearest treasure, he continued, as he advanced, to load the rifle with a hand as steady as if he had been about to practise at a target; and just as the ball was rammed home, and the priming carefully placed in the pan, he threw himself directly in front of the bear, so that it was only by first destroying him that she could possibly approach the objects of his care. It was a moment, and but a moment, of dreadful suspense, for the bear swerved neither to the right nor to the left from her onward path, and it was not until the muzzle of the rifle was within three yards of her forehead that he fired, taking his aim between her eyes; shaking her head as if more angered than hurt, she raised her huge form on her hind legs, and advanced to seize him, when he drew his pistol and discharged it into her chest, springing at the same time lightly back, almost to the spot to which Prairie-bird and her trembling companion seemed rooted as if by a spell. Although both shots had struck where they were aimed, the second appeared to have taken no more effect than the first, and the bear was again advancing to the attack, when War-Eagle, catching up from the ground a blanket which Lita had brought down to the brook, held it extended before him until the monster sprung against it, and with her claws rent it into shreds; not, however, before it had served for an instant the purpose of a veil; profiting by that opportunity, the heroic Delaware dashed in between her fore-paws and plunged his long knife into her breast. Short, though terrible, was the struggle that ensued; the bear was every moment growing weaker from the effect of the shot-wounds, and from loss of blood, and although she lacerated him dreadfully with her claws and teeth, she was not able to make him relax the determined grasp with which he clung to her, plunging the fatal knife again and again into her body, until at length she fell exhausted and expiring into a pool of her own blood, while the triumphant war-cry of the Delaware rung aloud through wood and vale.*

Alarmed by the shots, the yells of the dying

* To some who have read the descriptions of bear-hunts in Norway and Russia it may appear neither wonderful nor unusual that a single hunter should kill a full-grown bear; but it must be borne in mind, that the bear of the north of Europe bears about the same proportion to a grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains (*Ursus Horribilis*) as a panther does to a Bengal tiger. The grizzly bear is not only the largest and most ferocious of his species, but his tenacity of life is so remarkable that he frequently runs a considerable distance and survives some hours after receiving several balls through the lungs, head, and heart. On this account it is never safe for the most experienced marksman to attack him alone, unless there be some tree or place of safety at hand, for the grizzly bear cannot or will not climb a tree; and some idea of the animal's strength may be formed from the fact, attested by many credible witnesses, that, after killing a bison, he will frequently drag the carcase some distance to his lair. For descriptions and anecdotes of the grizzly bear see Lewis and Clarke's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, and Major Long's ditto. A feat almost similar to that recorded in the text was performed some years ago by an Iroquois, one of the last of his tribe, and who, though grievously wounded, survived. The author saw this Indian hero arrive at St. Louis in a canoe, containing only himself and a boy, they having descended the Missouri for more than 1500 miles in their frail bark and having passed in their perilous voyage the villages of Crows, Riccarees, Sioux, Black-feet, and other predatory tribes.

bear, and the shouts of the chief, several of the party now hastened towards the scene of action; but before they could reach it Reginald Brandon, who was just returning into camp with the results of a successful chace, caught the mingled sounds, and outstripping all his companions, arrived, panting and breathless, on the spot. For a moment he gazed on the strange and fearful spectacle that met his view. The Delaware chief, supporting his head upon his hand, still reclined against the body of his grim antagonist, his countenance calm in its expression, but both his face and his whole form covered with recent blood; at his feet lay Lita, perfectly unconscious, and sprinkled with the same crimson stream; while at his side knelt Prairie-bird, breathing over her heroic preserver the fervent outpourings of a grateful heart! Another moment, and Reginald was beside her; he understood instinctively all that had passed, and no sooner had ascertained that his betrothed was safe and unhurt, than he turned with affectionate and anxious solicitude to inquire into the condition of his friend. "Olitipa is safe and War-Eagle is happy," replied the chief.

By this time the Delawares were all gathered round their beloved leader, and in obedience to an order which he gave in a low voice, one of them threw a blanket over his torn and blood-stained dress, while another brought from the stream a bowl of fresh water, which Prairie-bird took from the messenger, and held to his parched lips; then, wetting a cloth, she washed the blood from his face, cooled his hot brow, and inquired, in a tone of sisterly affection, whether he found himself recruited and refreshed.

"The hand of Olitipa is medicine against pain, and her voice brings comfort!" replied the chief, gently. "War-Eagle is quite happy."

Not so were those around him. His stern warriors stood in sad unbroken silence; the features of the hardy guide worked with an emotion that he strove in vain to conceal, for he knew that the Delaware would not have retained his sitting posture by the carcase of the bear, had not his wounds been grievous and disabling; Reginald Brandon held the hand of his friend, unable to speak, save a few broken words of affection and gratitude: while Prairie-bird found at length relief for her oppressed heart in a flood of tears. So much engrossed were they all by their own feelings, that none seemed to notice the anguish of Lita, who still lay in a pool of blood at the feet of him whom she had long and secretly loved, giving no further signs of life than a succession of smothered wailings and groans that escaped from her unconscious lips.

The only countenance among those present that retained its unmoved composure was that of the Chief himself; and a bright ray shot from his dark eye when one of the bravest of his warriors laid down before him the claws of the huge bear and her cub, which he had cut off, according to custom, and now presented as a trophy of victory.

Baptiste and Pierre having conferred together for a few minutes, the former whispered to Reginald Brandon that Prairie-bird and Lita should be withdrawn for a short time, while War-Eagle's wounds were examined, and his real condition ascertained. Agreeably to this suggestion, Reginald led his betrothed weeping from the spot. Some of the Delawares and hunters removed Lita; but not without difficulty, as she still clung with frantic energy to the torn garments of the Chief; and, as they bore her away they now for the first time observed that she had received some severe scratches in her fruitless endeavour to rescue him from the struggles of the dying bear.

When all had retired to some distance, and there remained only by the Delaware the oldest of his warriors, Pierre and Baptiste, the latter gently lifted the blanket from the shoulders of the wounded man, saying, "Let my brother allow his friends to see the hurts which he has received, that they may endeavour to relieve or heal them."

The Chief nodded his assent, and no sign, save the dew that stood upon his brow, betrayed the agony and the sense of exhaustion that he endured. When the tattered remnants of his hunting dress were removed, a spectacle so terrible was presented to the eyes of the Guide, that even his iron nerves could not endure it, and, covering his face with his hands, he groaned aloud, while the exclamation, "Dieu de la misericorde!" broke from his lips in the language that they had first been taught to speak.

The left arm of the Chief was bitten through and through, and so dreadfully mangled that no skill of surgery could restore it; the shoulders and chest had been lacerated by the fore-paws, and some of the wounds wide and gaping, as if made by a saw or hatchet; these, however, might possibly yield to time and careful treatment; but the injuries that he had received in the lower part of the body were such as to leave no hope of recovery, for the bear, in her last dying struggles, had used the terrible claws of her hind-feet with such fatal effect, that the lacerated entrails of the sufferer protruded through the wound.

Baptiste saw at a glance that all was over, and that any attempt at closing the wounds would only cause additional and needless pain. War Eagle watched his countenance, and reading there a verdict that confirmed his own sensations, gave him his hand and smiled. The rough woodsman wrung it with ill-dissembled emotion, and turned away his head that his Indian friend might not see the moisture that gathered in his eye.

A brief consultation now ensued, during which it was arranged that the carcases of the bears should be carried away, and the wounded chief gently moved to a soft grassy spot a few yards distant, where his wounds might be so far dressed and bandaged as to prevent further effusion of blood. It was also agreed that the tent and the lodges should be brought to the spot, so that he might receive all the care and attention that his desperate case admitted.

These arrangements having been made, Baptiste walked slowly towards the place where the rest of the party awaited in deep anxiety the result of his report. As he drew near with heavy, lingering steps, and his weather-beaten countenance overspread with gloom, they saw too well the purport of his message, and none had courage enough to be the first to bid him speak. Prairie-bird clung to the arm of Reginald for support; the Delawares leaned upon their rifles in silence; and even the rough hunters of the prairie wore an aspect of sadness that contrasted strongly with their habitual bold and reckless bearing.

Recovering his composure by a powerful effort, the Guide looked gravely around him as soon as he reached the centre of a semicircle in which they stood, and addressing himself first to Reginald and the white men, said, "There is no cure for the wounds of the Delaware; were the

Black Father himself among us, his skill and his medicine would be in vain." Then turning to the Delawares, he added in their own tongue, "The sun of the Lenapé Chief is setting. The Great Spirit has sent for him, and he must obey: let his warriors gather round him to smooth his path through the dark valley."

Having thus spoken, the Guide hastened to carry into effect the arrangements above mentioned, and in a short time the little camp was moved to the spot where the Delaware reclined against the stump of a withered alder, over which his followers had already thrown some blankets and buffalo-robes to soften his couch. Hither was brought the tent of Prairie-bird, which was so pitched that the outer compartment might shelter the wounded chief, and might afford to Reginald and Prairie-bird the means of watching him constantly, and administering such relief in his extremity, as was within their power.

Lita's energies, both of mind and body, seemed entirely paralyzed, she neither wept nor sobbed, but sate in a corner of the tent, whence she gazed intently, yet with a vacant expression, upon the sufferer.

He alone of the whole party maintained throughout a dignified and unmoved composure; nor could either the pangs he endured, nor the certain prospect of a lingering death, draw from him a word of complaint. He smiled gratefully as Prairie-bird from time to time raised the refreshing cup of water to his lips, or wiped away the drops which weakness and agony wrung from his forehead. Once, and once only, did a look of gloom and discontent pass over his countenance.

Reginald observing it, took his hand and inquired, "Is there a dark thought in my brother's heart, let him speak it?"

"There is," replied the chief, with stern energy, "Mahéga, the bloody-hand—the Washashe wolf—the slayer of my tribe, he lives, and War-Eagle must go to the hunting-fields of the brave, and when his fathers say to him, 'Where is the scalp of Mahéga?' his tongue will be silent, and his hands will be empty."

"His hands will not be empty," replied Reginald, breathing his own impassioned feelings in the figurative language of his friend. "His hands will not be empty; he can shew the scalps of many enemies; he may tell the ancient people that he was the war-chief of their race, that neither Wahashe nor Dahcotah ever saw his back; and that, to save his sister's life, he gave his own. Where is the warrior who would not envy the fame of War-Eagle, and who would not rejoice in the glory of such a death?"

These words, and the tone of earnest feeling in which they were spoken, touched the right chord in the heart of the Chief; he pressed the hand of his friend, and a smile of triumph shot across his features like a sunbeam breaking through the thick darkness of a thunder-cloud.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Mahéga is found in strange company, and Wingenund defers, on account of more important concerns, his plan for the liberation of his friends.—A council, a combat, and a skirmish, in which last, the Crows receive assistance from a quarter whence they least expected it.

We left Wingenund on his way to the Crow camp, revolving as he went various schemes for the deliverance of his friends. However slight was the faith which he was disposed to place in the honesty of Besha, he confidently believed that the horse-dealer's self-interest would keep him true, at least for the time, to the party whence the greater rewards and presents might be expected. He knew also that Bending-willow was kindly disposed towards the prisoners, and would do all that was in her power towards engaging her impatient and hot-headed husband to favour their release. Nevertheless the game to be played was a difficult one, especially as the consequence of any unsuccessful attempt might prove fatal to them as well as to himself.

So intent was the youth upon these meditations, that he forgot the distance and the difficulties of his circuitous route, his light elastic step bearing him over hill and vale with a speed of which he was scarcely conscious, and long before the sun went down he found himself at the farther extremity of the mountain pass, which has been before mentioned as leading into the valley where the Crows were encamped, from a quarter exactly opposite to that where his own friends were stationed.

As he was about to step across a small rivulet that trickled from the rocks above, lending a greener freshness to the narrow strip of grass through which it flowed, his attention was arrested by a recent footmark upon its margin. Starting with surprise, he stooped to examine it more carefully, it was plain and distinct, so that a less sagacious eye than his might have traced its form and dimensions. A single look satisfied him, and as he rose from his scrutiny, the name of Mahéga escaped from his lips.

Without a moment's hesitation, he resolved to follow the trail of the Osage and observe his movements, conjecturing that these probably boded no good to the Delaware party, although he felt at some loss to imagine what object could lead him to a quarter almost immediately opposite to that where they were encamped.

The task which Wingenund had now undertaken was not an easy one, for the ground was hard and barren, and the short grass partly dried by the mountain winds and partly burnt by the summer sun, scarcely received any impression from the pressure of a foot, and the youth was compelled to pause so frequently in order to examine the scarcely perceptible marks of the trail, that his progress was far from being so rapid as he could have wished. Nevertheless he toiled perseveringly forward, his hopes being every now and then refreshed by finding on the descent of the steep hill-side, an indication of the Osage's tread that he could not mistake.

Wingenund had followed the trail for several hours, when he caught a distant view of a slight column of smoke rising from a dell, the bottom of which was concealed by intervening heights. One of these, more rugged and lofty than the rest, lay at his right hand, and he climbed with some difficulty to the top of it, in hopes of being able thence to descry the spot whence the smoke arose. Neither was he disappointed in this expectation, for on reaching the height, he could see into the deep bosom of the mountain glen, where he clearly discerned a large body of men and horses, assembled round a fire; carefully noting the nature of the intervening ground, he re-descended the hill, and again threw himself

upon the trail of the Osage, which continued, as he expected, to lead him in the direction of the unknown band.

As he advanced he felt the necessity of using the greatest caution lest he should inadvertently come within sight of any scouts or stragglers from the valley below; but fortune and his own skill so far favoured his approach that he reached unperceived a point whence he could more clearly see the circle assembled round the fire, and could distinguish the horses and the men sufficiently to ascertain that they belonged to some mountain tribe bent on a war excursion, as they had with them neither their women nor their lodges. With awakened curiosity and interest, the youth now crept to a spot at a little distance, where a confused pile of huge stones, here and there overgrown with stunted shrubs, offered a sheltered retreat, whence, without being himself seen, he could observe all that passed below. In making his way to the place he was somewhat surprised to find what might almost be called a beaten path, upon which the recent tracks of men and horses, as well as of bison, were clearly discernible.

He had scarcely time to conceal himself, when he perceived two men coming directly towards his hiding-place, in one of whom he recognised the Osage chief, while the other belonged apparently to some tribe of Indians that he had never seen before. They came slowly up the path before-mentioned, stopping almost at every step, and conversing in the language of signs, by which means their expressions of mutual friendship were as intelligible to the quick-witted youth as they were to each other. The stranger was a fine-looking Indian, and though lower in stature than his gigantic companion, had the appearance of great muscular strength, and his dress betokened, according to Indian notions of magnificence, a chief of high degree. His black hair was clubbed behind his head, and fastened with several painted feathers bound with fillets of ermine; his hunting-shirt was of the skin of the mountain goat, and both it and his deerskin leggins were ornamented with porcupine quills, and fringed with the scalp-locks of enemies slain in battle; he carried in his hand a long lance, also decorated with scalp-locks, and at his back hung a quiver made from the skin of the panther, in which bristled a score of arrows beautifully tipped with sharp flint, and attached to it by a leather thong, was a bow so short, that it looked more like the plaything of a boy than the deadly weapon of a warrior.

Wingenund wondered to what tribe the stranger might belong; and as the two Indians seated themselves upon a fragment of rock only a few yards from the recess in which he was ensconced, he trusted that some signal would pass by which his curiosity might be afterwards satisfied; at all events, it seemed clear that they were already upon the best terms with each other, for they smiled and grinned, each placing a hand upon the heart of the other, after which Mahega extended his arms like a flying bird, and then passed his right hand with a rapid movement round his own scalp; from which sign the youth instantly knew that their plot was to attack and kill the Upsarokas.

"Double-tongued cowardly snake!" said Wingenund to himself, "he made a league with the Dahcotahs to destroy his Lenape friends, and now he makes one with a stranger tribe to destroy those with whom he eats and smokes."

That the youth rightly conjectured the object of the interview he could no longer doubt, when Mahega, pointing directly to the valley where the Crows were encamped, repeated again the signals for attack and slaughter Not a word passed during this time excepting when the stranger drew from under his hunting shirt a small whistle, made apparently either from a bone or a reed, and quaintly ornamented with stained quills and the down from the breast of some mountain bird; having applied this to his lips, he drew from it a peculiar sound, not remarkable for its shrillness, but different from any tone that Wingenund remembered to have heard before.

After two or three attempts, Mahega succeeded in sounding it correctly; and nodding intelligently to the stranger, concealed it carefully in his belt; they then exchanged the names or war-cry by which they were to recognize each other, Mahega teaching his new friend to say "*Washashe*," and learning in return to pronounce *Kain-na*," which he repeated three or four times so distinctly, that Wingenund caught and remembered it. These preparatory civilities having passed, they proceeded to the interchange of presents, by which their alliance was to be cemented.

Mahéga drew from his girdle a pistol, which he gave, together with a small leather pouch containing lead and powder, to the stranger chief, who received it with an air so puzzled and mysterious, that Mahéga could scarcely refrain from smiling. He turned the pistol over and over, looking down the barrel, and examining the lock with a curiosity that he cared not to conceal; he pointed it, however, towards a mark in an adjoining rock, and made a sound with his lips, which was intended to imitate its report, repeating at the same time the word "sachsi-nama," as if to show that the name and use of the weapon were not strange to him, although he might never have seen one before. Mahéga then proceeded to show him how to use it, making signs that with it he might kill all his enemies; and upon the stranger expressing a wish to see an instance of its power, he placed a thin flat stone at the distance of a few yards, and split it in two at the first shot; after which he reloaded it, showing at the same time the use of the priming-pan and trigger.

It was not without a look of gratified pride that he placed the pistol in his belt, repeating again and again, "sachsi-nama," "nahtovi-nama." He then unslung the short bow that hung at his back, and presented it, with the panther-skin quiver full of arrows, to the Osage chief, who received the gift with every appearance of satisfaction, and they parted, the former returning towards the encampment of his tribe, after he had told Mahéga that the name of the bow was "nutsi-nâma."*

* Of all the Indian nations who inhabit the wild regions near the base of the Rocky Mountain range, the most fierce and powerful are the Black-feet. Few, if any, white men have penetrated into the heart of their country, and returned to tell their tale. Very little is known, therefore, either of their customs or language: and it may not be uninteresting for the reader to be informed, that every particular mentioned respecting them in this volume was obtained direct from a French trader, who had been per

For some time after the departure of his new a..y, the Osage remained upon his seat examining the bow, which at first sight he had considered a mere toy, but which he found, to his astonishment, required all his force to draw it to its full power. Being formed of bone, strengthened throughout with sinew, it was stiff and elastic to an extraordinary degree; and, although not more than three feet in length, would drive an arrow as far as an ordinary six-feet bow.

When he had sufficiently examined his new acquisition, it occurred to the chief that he could not, without risk of detection, carry it into the Crow camp. He resolved, therefore, to hide it in a dry cleft of the rock, and take it out again after the issue of his plot should be decided.

This resolution threatened to bring about an unexpected catastrophe, as it happened that he approached the very recess in which Wingenund was stationed. Drawing the knife from his belt, the youth stood in the inmost corner of the cavern, ready, as soon as discovery became inevitable, to spring upon his powerful enemy; but fate had otherwise decreed, and the Osage passed on to a higher and narrower cleft, where he deposited the quiver and the bow, carefully closing the aperture with moss and lichen.

It was not until he had gone some distance on his homeward way, that Wingenund emerged from his hiding-place, and, having possessed himself of the quiver and bow, returned slowly upon the Osage's trail towards the Upsaroka camp, proving as he went the surprising strength of the weapon, and admiring the straightness and beauty of the war-arrows with which the quiver was supplied.*

Following unperceived, and at some distance, the steps of the Osage, he found that the latter took a shorter, though a somewhat steeper and more rugged, way than that by which he had come; so that very little more than two hours of brisk walking brought him within sight of the watch-fires of the Upsaroka camp, just as day closed, and their light began to shine more brightly through the valley. Availing himself of the shelter of a stunted pine, the youth lay down for some time, and did not re-enter the camp until late at night, when he made his way without interruption to Besha's tent, giving to the outposts by whom he was challenged the countersign taught him by the horse-dealer.

On the following morning, before sunrise, Besha was aroused by Wingenund, who told him that he had news of great importance to communicate to the Crow chiefs, and that no time should be lost before they were summoned to council. The horse-dealer rubbed his eyes, as he wakened by degrees, and listened to this intelligence, which he suspected at first to be some trick on the part of the youth for the liberation of his friends; but there was an earnest simplicity in his manner that carried conviction with it; and Besha endeavoured, as he threw on his hunting-shirt, and fastened his belt, to learn from the youth the nature and purport of his intelligence. The latter seemed, however to be in no very communicative mood, he merely replied, "Wingenund speaks not the Upsaroka tongue; let Besha repeat to the council word after word what he hears, that will be enough; he will serve both the Crows and the Delawares, and will obtain thanks and presents from both. Let Mahéga, too, be called to attend the council."

The horse-dealer having departed upon his errand, Wingenund found an opportunity to detail briefly to Paul Müller and Ethelston the discovery that he had made on the preceding evening; but it may well be imagined that he could obtain from neither any information respecting the mountain tribe with whom the Osage was carrying on his treacherous intrigue.

"Let my son boldly speak the truth," said the Missionary, "and leave the result to God."

"Wingenund never told a lie," replied the young Delaware; and the bright, fearless expression of his countenance warranted the proud assertion.

"How many are there in our crowded cities and churches," said the Missionary looking after the youth as he re-entered the horse-dealer's lodge, "who dare echo that speech? yet methinks, as far as memory and conscience serve him, he has said no more than the truth. I have known him from his childhood, and believe him to be as much a stranger to falsehood as to fear."

"They are cousins-german, my worthy friend," said Ethelston, "and generally dwell together! I wonder not at the affection which Reginald bears to that youth; nature has stamped upon his countenance all the high and generous qualities that endear man to his brother. Let us endeavour to be present at the council which is now assembling; we have been such quiet prisoners, that perhaps our guards will allow us to be spectators on this occasion."

Besha happening to pass at this moment, obtained for them the desired permission, which was the more readily granted that the Crow sentries themselves were desirous of seeing what was going forward, and knew that no danger could be apprehended from the two unarmed captives. The spectacle that met their view when they issued from the lodge was striking and picturesque; runners had been sent throughout the camp, and all the principal chiefs, braves, and medicine-men were already assembled in a semicircle, the concave centre of which was formed by the lodge of White-Bull and his father, the latter of whom had put on for the occasion a magnificent head-dress of painted eagle-feathers, which betokened his rank as head-chief of the band. The horse-dealer stood in front of his own lodge to the left, and frequent were the glances directed to him from all quarters, it

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mitted to marry a Black-foot wife, and had resided nineteen years among them. The construction of their language is very remarkable, and some account of it would doubtless be gladly received by philologists; but such a subject cannot be treated in a work like the present. With respect to the words referred to in the text, it will be seen that they show the synthetic nature of the language, "nâma" being the root, and signifying a *weapon*. Hence came "suksinâma," *rifle*; literally, "heavy-weapon;" "saksinâma," *pistol*; literally, "light-weapon;" "nahtovinâma," *wonderful*, or *medicine-weapon*; and "aksinâma," literally, *useless-weapon*; which latter name has probably been given to the bow since the Black-feet have learnt the superior efficacy of fire-arms.

* It may not be generally known to European readers that the arrows used by the western Indians are of two sorts. The *hunting-arrow*, which has a head tapering in the form of an acute lozenge, and firmly secured to the shaft, so as to be easily withdrawn from a wound, and the war-arrow, sometimes poisoned, but always barbed *like a fish-hook*, and having its head so slightly fastened *to the shaft, as to remain* infixed in the wound when the *wood is pulled out*.

having been generally understood that the council was summoned to consider matters brought forward by him. Behind him stood Wingenund, wrapped in a loose blanket, which partially concealed his features and covered entirely the rest of his person; on the opposite wing of the circle, and at a distance of twenty-five or thirty yards, stood Mahéga, his gigantic stature shown off to the best advantage by the warlike dress which he had put on complete for the solemn occasion, his neck and arms being covered with beads of various colours, and his fingers playing unconsciously with the weighty iron-pointed mace or war-club which had slain so many of those whose scalp-locks now fringed his leathern shirt and hose. The warriors and other Indians of inferior degree stood in the back-ground, and some, anxious to get a better view of what was going forward, had perched themselves upon the adjoining rocks and cliffs, where their dusky forms, dimly seen through the mists which were now vanishing before the beams of the rising sun, gave a wild and picturesque effect to the scene.

Nearly half an hour was consumed by the soothsayers, or medicine-men, in going through their formal mummeries, to ascertain whether the hour and the occasion were favourable for the proposed business; and it was not until the medicine-pipe had been passed round, and the chief functionary had turned gravely to the north, south, east, and west, blowing to each quarter successively a whiff of medicine-smoke, that he gave his permission for the council to proceed with its deliberations.

During all this time a profound silence reigned throughout the camp, the women suspending their scolding, chattering, and domestic avocations, and even the children peeping, half-frightened, from behind their mothers, or stealing away to some spot where they might laugh and play without fear of being whipped for disturbing the solemnities.

The venerable father of White-Bull now returned the great pipe to the medicine-men, saying, in a voice distinctly audible throughout the circle, "Besha has called the chiefs and braves of the Upsaroka together; they are come—their ears are open—let the one-eyed man, who brings horses from the far prairies, speak with a single tongue."

Thus called upon, the horse-dealer stepped forward, saying, "Besha is neither wise in council, nor a chief among warriors; he has travelled far among the eastern tribes, and he knows their tongues; he stands here to give out of his mouth what goes in at his ear. Let the Upsaroka warriors listen; they are not fools; they will soon know if lies are told to them. Let them look at this youth; his blanket is that of Besha's slave; he is not what he seems; he is a son of the Lenapé, a friend of the whites; yet he is come alone into the camp to show to the Upsaroka that a snake is crawling among their lodges."

A murmur ran through the assembly as Besha pronourced these words, and pointed to Wingenund, who, throwing the blanket into the hollow of his left arm, advanced to the front, and, with a slight inclination to the old chief, awaited his permission to proceed.

The youth, the graceful form, the open countenance, and the dignified bearing of Wingenund as he stood forward in the assembled circle, prepossessed the Crows strongly in his favour; and they awaited, with excited curiosity, the intelligence that he had to communicate; but their chief did not appear disposed to gratify their patience, for after whispering a few words to a messenger who stood beside him, he relapsed into silence, scanning with a fixed gaze the countenance of the young Delaware. The latter bore the scrutiny with modest, yet undisturbed composure, and not a voice was raised in the council until the return of the messenger, conducting a Crow doctor or conjuror, somewhat advanced in years, who took his station by the chief, and gave a silent assent to the whispered orders that he received.

It may well be imagined with what mingled feelings of surprise and indignation the haughty Osage beheld the young Delaware thus standing forward in the midst of the council-circle, that his presence boded no good to himself he well knew; but how and wherefore he came, and why he, belonging as he did to a hostile band, was thus permitted to appear before the assembly of Crow warriors, he was quite at a loss to understand. His suspense, however, was not destined to be of long duration; for, as soon as Besha, in obedience to a signal from the chief, had desired Wingenund to speak what he had to say, the youth came another step forward, and said, in a clear voice—

"There is a snake among the lodges of the Upsaroka—a hidden snake, that will bite before its rattle is heard."

The Crows looked from one to the other as Besha translated this sentence, and the old conjuror gave a slight nod to the chief, indicating that the youth's meaning was rightly given. It may be as well to inform the reader, that the said conjuror had in early life been taken prisoner by the Pawnees, with a party of whom he had been conveyed to a great council held with the Indian agents at St. Charles's, in Missouri, respecting the cession and appropriation of territory. Several of the Western Delawares had been present at this meeting, which was protracted for many weeks, and the Crow prisoner had picked up a smattering of their tongue, which, however slight it might be, had occasioned him to be sent for on this occasion to check any propensity for untruth that might be entertained by the horse-dealer. Whether the latter was influenced by these, or by other motives, he rendered faithfully the conversation that ensued, and therefore it is not necessary to notice further the part played by the interpreter.

"Who is it that speaks?" demanded the old chief, with dignity; "the Crows open not their ears to the idle words of strangers."

"Then let them shut their ears," replied the youth, boldly. "Before another sun has set, they will wish they had listened to the words of Wingenund!"

"Who is Wingenund? Is he not an enemy have not his people shed Upsaroka blood? why then should they believe his words?"

"Wingenund is the son of a Lenapé chief For a thousand summers his fathers have hunted over forest and plain beyond the Great River. Wingenund has heard of their deeds, and he will not stain his lips with a lie. The Lenapé

have taken Crow scalps in defence of their own; Wingenund will not deny it; but he came here to serve his white friends, not to hurt the Upsaroka."

On hearing this bold reply, White-Bull bent his brow fiercely upon the speaker; but the youth met his eye with a look of bright untroubled confidence, while he quietly awaited the chief's further interrogation.

"Let the son of the Lenapé speak, but let him beware; if his tongue is forked, the Upsaroka knives will cut it out from his head."

"Wingenund is not a woman, that he should be frightened with big words. When he speaks, the truth comes from his lips; and if he chooses to be silent, the Upsaroka knives cannot make him speak," replied the youth, with a look of lofty scorn.

"Is it so? we shall see," cried White-Bull, springing forward, at the same time drawing his knife, with which he struck full at the naked breast of the youth. Not a muscle moved in the form or countenance of Wingenund; his eye remained steadily fixed on that of the Crow, and he did not even raise in his defence the arm over which his blanket was suspended. Nothing could have saved him from instant death, had not White-Bull himself arrested the blow just as it was falling, so that the point of the knife scratched, but did not penetrate the skin. Wingenund smiled, and the Crow warrior, partly ashamed of his own ebullition of temper, and partly in admiration of the cool courage of the young Delaware, said to his father, "Let him speak; there are no lies upon his tongue."

The old man looked for a moment sternly at his son, as if he would have reproved him for his violence, in interrupting the business of the council, but apparently he thought it better to let it pass; and turning toward Wingenund, he said, in a milder tone than he had yet used, "Let the young stranger speak, if he will; his words will not be blown away: if he has seen a snake, let him show it, and the chiefs of the Upsaroka will owe him a debt."

Thus appealed to, Wingenund, slowly raising the forefinger of his right hand, pointed it full upon Mahéga, saying, in a loud voice, "There is the snake! Fed by the hand of the Upsaroka, clad in their gifts, warmed by their fire, he now tries to bite them, and give them over to their enemies, even as his black heart and forked tongue have before destroyed those whom he called brothers."

It is beyond the power of words to paint the rage of the conscious Osage, on hearing this charge; he concealed it, however, by a strong effort, under a show of just indignation, exclaiming aloud, "The Upsaroka warriors are not fools, that they should believe the idle words of a stranger boy, a spy who stole into their camp by night, and now tickles their ears with lies."

"The young Lenapé must tell more," said the old chief, gravely, "before the Upsaroka can believe bad things of a warrior who has smoked and fought with them, and has taken the scalps of their enemies."

Thus called upon, Wingenund proceeded to relate distinctly the circumstances narrated in *the last chapter*. His tale was so clearly told; *his description of* the locality so accurate, that the attention of the whole council was riveted, and they listened with the most profound attention. A cloud gathered upon the brow of White-Bull, and the gigantic frame of Mahéga swelled with a tempest of suppressed passion. Independently of the dangers that now threatened him, his proud spirit chafed at the thought of being thus tracked, discovered, exposed, and disgraced by a boy, and his fury was heightened by observing the bright eye of the Delaware youth fixed upon him with a steady, searching gaze, indicative at once of conscious truth and triumph. Still he resolved to hold out to the last; he trusted that after the great services he had rendered in battle to the Crows, they would at least believe his word before that of an unknown youth, who came amongst them under such suspicious circumstances. These reflections passing rapidly through his mind, restored his disturbed self-possession, and enabled him to curl his haughty features into an expression of sneering contempt,

Great was the excitement among the Crows as Wingenund described, with unerring minuteness and accuracy, the dress and equipments of the stranger with whom Mahéga had held the interview, and there was a dead silence in the council when the interpreter was ordered to inquire whether he knew to what tribe the strange Indian belonged.

"Wingenund knows not," he replied; "but he heard the name that was taught to the Osage as the battle-cry of his new allies."

"*E-chĭ-pē-tā!*" shouted the impetuous White-Bull, who had already recognised in the youth's description one of the warriors of the Black-feet, the hereditary enemies of his tribe.

"It was not so," replied Wingenund gravely. "*Ka-in-na**" was the name; it was twice spoken."

A deep murmur ran round the assembly, White-Bull exchanged a significant glance with the nearest of his braves, and again a profound silence reigned throughout the assembly.

Mahéga now felt that the crisis of his fate was at hand, and that everything must depend on his being able to throw discredit on the tale of Wingenund. This was not, however, an easy task, for he suspected Besha of a secret leaning to the Delaware side, while the fierce and lowering looks of the bystanders showed him how little was wanting to make the smothered flame burst forth.

These indications did not escape the aged chief, who spoke a few words in a serious and warning tone, the purport of which was to remind them that the present council was sacred to the Medicine, and was not to be desecrated by any violence or shedding of blood. He concluded by saying, "Let the Washashe speak for himself, and let Besha give his words truly, if he does not wish to have his ears cut off."

Thus admonished, the horse-dealer lent all his attention to the Osage, who came forward

* The name by which the Black-feet are generally known among the Crows is "Echipeta." In their own tongue they call themselves Siksiknga;" both words having the signification of Black-feet. They are divided into three bands, the largest of which is called by the generic name above mentioned, as being that of the tribe; the other two bands are called "Piecan" or "Piegan" (the meaning of which word is not known to the author) and Ka-in-na or "Bloody-men," which last are held to be the most fierce and formidable of the three

to address the council with an imposing dignity of manner that almost made the most suspicious of his hearers doubt the truth of the accusations brought against him.

Being now in front of the semicircle, which was not more than twenty yards in width, he was directly opposite to Wingenund, who stood forward a few feet in advance of its other wing. The contrast offered by the stature and bearing of the accuser and the accused, the slight, active frame, the youth and grace of the one, and the haughty air and gigantic bulk of the other, struck Ethelston so forcibly that he could not forbear whispering to Paul Müller, "Worthy Father, does not the scene recall to mind the meeting between the Hebrew shepherd and the Giant of Gath?"

"It does, my son, and I misjudge the looks of the Osage if they part hence without the shedding of blood. I have long studied his countenance, and, however skilfully he has subdued its expression, I can trace the full storm of passions raging within his breast."

Further discourse was prevented by the commencement of the Osage's speech, which he delivered with a tone and gesture of indignation, suitable to one who declared himself injured and belied.

He began by recapitulating the services that he had rendered to the Crows, the faithful warriors that he had lost in their cause, and the valuable presents concealed in the cache, to which he was even now conducting them; on the other hand, he painted the injuries they had received from the Lenapé, who had come into their country in league with the white-skins, the bane of their tribe and race, that their hands were still wet with Upsaroka blood; and "whose is the forked tongue," said he, "that is to cover with lies and dirt the fame of the great chief of the Washashe, the sworn brother of the Upsaroka? Who, but a boy, a stranger, a liar, and a spy, telling his idle dreams to the council to break the friendship of warriors whom his cowardly tribe, and their pale-faced allies, dared not meet in the field!"

During the whole of this tirade, which was delivered with much vehemence and gesticulation, Wingenund stood motionless as a statue, his calm eye fixed upon the excited countenance of his opponent with an undisguised expression of contempt.

Receiving no reply, Mahéga continued: 'Chiefs and brothers, you are wise in council -men of experience; your ears will not be tickled with the idle songs of this false-tongued singing-bird; a messenger who brings such news to the great council of the Upsaroka—who tells them that their brother who has fought by their side, and smoked at their fire, is a forked snake, he must bring something better able to convince them than the cunning words coming from his own lying lips!"

These words, supported by the commanding tone assumed by the Osage, were not without their effect upon the minds of that fierce and keenly-interested assemblage.

Wingenund waited until the speech of his antagonist had been translated to them, when he replied, with unmoved composure, "If the Crow warriors require better witness than words, it is not difficult to find: they have already been told that the Kain-na stranger gave to Mahéga a present of a bow and arrows, which he hid in the rocks; Wingenund took them out, and here they are."

As the youth spoke he dropped the blanket that had been thrown over his left arm and shoulder, holding up to the council the bow and arrows, which all present instantly recognised as being made and ornamented by the Black-feet.

"Are the warriors yet convinced," continued the youth, raising his voice, "or do they wish for more? if they do, let them seize the Washashe wolf, they will find in his belt—"

He was not allowed to finish the sentence, the storm that had long been brooding, now burst in all its fury. Mahéga, driven to desperation by the damning evidence brought against him, and reckless of all save the gratification of his fierce revenge, whirled his iron-pointed mace around his head, and launched it with tremendous force at Wingenund.

Never had the latter even for an instant taken his falcon eye off the Osage; but so swift was the motion with which the weapon was thrown, that although he sprung lightly aside to avoid it, the spiked head grazed and laid open his cheek, whence it glanced off, and striking an unlucky Crow who stood behind him, felled him, with a broken arm, to the ground. Even in the act of stooping to escape the mace, Wingenund fitted an arrow into the Black-foot bow which he held in his hand; and rising quick as thought, let it fly at his gigantic adversary with so true an aim, that it pierced the wind-pipe, and the point came out at the back of his neck, close to the spine. While the Osage, half strangled and paralysed, tugged ineffectually at the fatal shaft, Wingenund leaped upon him with the bound of a tiger, and uttering aloud the war-cry of the Lenapé, buried his knife in the heart of his foe. With one convulsive groan the dying Osage fell heavily to the earth; and ere the bystanders had recovered from their astonishment, his blood-stained scalp hung at the belt of the victorious Delaware.

For a moment all was tumult and confusion, the few remaining Osages made a rush towards Wingenund to avenge the death of their chief, but they were instantly overpowered, and secured with thongs of pliant bark, while White-Bull sprang into the arena of combat, and in a voice of thunder shouted to his warriors to stand back and unstring their bows.

During the brief but decisive conflict the appearance of Wingenund was so much changed, that Ethelston declared to his friend afterwards that he should not have recognised him. The muscles of his active frame swelled with exertion, while the expanded nostril and flashing eye gave to his countenance an expression of fierce excitement, almost amounting to ferocity. Now that the struggle was over, he resumed without an effort, the habitual quiet gentleness of his demeanour, and turning to Besha, said. "Let the Upsaroka chiefs look below the belt of that dead wolf; perhaps they will find the signal whistle of the Kainna."

The horse-dealer stooped; and searching as he was directed, found a small leathern bag, on opening which there fell out, as Wingenund had said, the whistle of the Black-foot chief; a veil

f indignation burst from the assembly, some of the nearest of whom vented their rage by bestowing sundry kicks upon the inanimate remains of the treacherous Osage.

Popularity is a plant that springs up as suddenly, and perishes as rapidly among the tribes of the western wilderness, as among the mobs of Paris or of London; and Wingenund, whose life would scarcely have been safe had he been found an hour earlier in the Crow camp, was now its hero and its idol. To say that the youth was not elated, would be to say that he was not human; for he had avenged the slaughter of his kindred, and had overcome the most powerful and renowned warrior in the Missouri plains, the fell destroyer of the race of Tamenund. But so well had he been trained in the school of self-command, that neither Ethelston, nor Paul Müller, who had known him from his childhood, could trace in his demeanour anything different from its usual quiet modesty; and they waited, with no little impatience, to see what results would ensue from his triumph in respect to their own release.

The Crow chiefs and warriors did not forget, in the excitement of the scene just described, the threatened attack to which the treachery of Mahéga had exposed them; and they now crowded round Wingenund, while White-Bull put many questions to him, through Besha, respecting the position and apparent numbers of the Black-feet, to all which he answered with a precision that increased the high opinion that they already entertained of his quickness and intelligence. White-Bull even condescended so far as to explain to him his own projects for withdrawing his band from the neighbourhood of the formidable Kainna to some more secure position. A slight smile curled the lip of the young Delaware as he said to Besha, "The council of the Crow chief does not seem good to Wingenund; if White-Bull will agree to his terms, he will place the Kainna chief, and half a score of his best warriors as captives in this camp before to-morrow at midday!"

A general murmur of surprise followed these words; and White-Bull, somewhat nettled, inquired what might be the terms proposed.

"They are," said Wingenund, "first, that the two white prisoners shall be immediately restored to their friends; secondly, that the Osages shall be given up to the Lenapé; thirdly, that there shall be peace and friendship between the friends of Wingenund and the Upsaroka until the snow falls again upon the earth."

The leaders having conversed apart for a few minutes, White-Bull said, "If Wingenund fails, and the Kainna take many scalps from the Upsaroka, what will happen then?"

"They will take the scalp of Wingenund too," replied the youth calmly.

Again the Crow chiefs consulted together for some time, and at length they resolved to agree to the terms proposed by Wingenund. The medicine-pipe was brought, and was passed from the chief to him, as well as to Ethelston and the Missionary; after which Wingenund said to White-Bull, "There is no time to be lost; let sixty of the best warriors be chosen, *twenty to go with* Wingenund, and forty with *White-Bull, and let one* be found, very large *as I tall; let him put on* the dress of Mahéga; Wingenund will take the whistle, and all will be ready."

A short time sufficed to collect and marshal the party; and Ethelston was, at his own earnest request, permitted to join the band led by the Delaware youth, being anxious to see the manœuvres about to take place, and Besha having made himself responsible for his fidelity.

Wingenund led the way at a swift pace, until he gained the summit of the first range of hills; nor did he slacken it until he had crossed the valley beyond, and stood upon the opposite brow of the heights, whence the Black-foot band was visible. Here he concealed and halted his party, until he had crept forward and examined all the range of hills within sight. As soon as he had satisfied himself that all was quiet, he drew his party gently on, and at length succeeded in hiding White-Bull and his forty men behind some rocks in the steepest and narrowest part of the gorge leading down to the glen below. His quick eye had noted the spot before, and a more minute inspection now convinced him that there was no other pass by which the enemy could ascend the height, and that a handful of determined men might defend it against ten times their number.

Having warned White-Bull to keep his own men close, and to stir neither hand nor foot until he heard the Lenapé war-cry, which was the appointed signal, he retreated with his own band of twenty men to the point where the interview between Mahéga and the Black-foot had taken place, which was about forty yards higher up the mountain, and where the gorge was almost as narrow and precipitous as at the pass below. Here he concealed his men among the rocks, and Ethelston primed and loaded three rifles which they had taken from the Osages, and which were now destined for the use of Wingenund and himself.

For several weary hours the youth watched in vain for the approach of the Black-feet; and any nerves less steady than his own, would have been shaken by the remembrance of the disagreeable consequences that might result from the failure of his plot. He lay, however, still and motionless as the stone upon which his elbow rested, until, just as the grey hue of evening was beginning to steal over the landscape he descried an Indian slowly ascending the steep, followed at a distance by a long line of warriors. A low whistle from Wingenund warned his party to be ready, but he moved not, until the advancing band were sufficiently near for him to recognise in their leader the chief who had conferred with Mahéga on the preceding day.

While they were approaching in careless security, the Crows prepared for the attack, each man being provided with a tough halter of bison-hide, in addition to his usual weapons of bow, knife, and war-club, and the leader of the Black-feet had already passed the lower gorge, (where White-Bull and his party were concealed,) ere he sounded the signal preconcerted with Mahéga. Wingenund immediately replied by a similar sound drawn from the whistle which he had secured, desiring at the same time the Crow who wore the dress of the slain Osage to show himself at the edge of the rock

skirting the pass. The Black-foot chief, completely deceived, toiled lazily up the steep and narrow ascent, beckoning to his men to follow; and just as he reached the upper station Wingenund, seeing that twelve or fourteen of them were now fairly caged between the party below and his own, leapt from his concealment upon the astonished leader of the Black-feet, and dealing him a blow on the head that stunned and disabled him, shouted aloud the war-cry of the Lenapé.

No sooner was the signal uttered, than White-Bull rushed from his ambuscade, and seized the pass below; so that the unfortunate Black-feet, enclosed between the two parties, panic-struck by the suddenness of the attack, and the fall of their leader, could neither fight nor fly; and in spite of their desperate, but unavailing attempts at resistance, were all in the course of a few minutes disarmed and securely bound.

Meanwhile the main body of their comrades made a gallant attempt to force the lower pass, but it was so stoutly defended by the Crows, and was in itself so narrow and difficult, that they were soon forced to retire with loss. Neither could those who succeeded to the command bring them again to the attack. The war-cry of the Lenapé had never before been heard in these glens, and the dismayed Black-feet thought that the evil spirits were fighting against them; while to increase their terror, Ethelston and Wingenund fired two of the rifles over their heads, the bullets from which whistled past them, and the echoes of their report, prolonged by the rocks and crags around died away at length like the muttered thunder of a distant storm. Terrified by the suddenness of the attack, and by the noise of the fire arms, ignorant of the number, position, and even of the nation of their unexpected assailants, and fearful that another manœuvre might cut off their retreat, they fled precipitately down the mountain side, and halted not until they brought their tale of disgrace and disaster into the Kainna camp.

In the course of a few hours after the events above narrated, Wingenund and White-Bull stood together before the lodge of the aged chief of the Crows, whom the former addressed as follows:—"My father, see there the Kainna chief, and twelve of his best warriors; they are prisoners; their life hangs upon my father's breath; the promise of Wingenund has not been blown away by the wind."

Besha having duly translated this address, was desired by the old chief (whose astonishment was scarcely exceeded by his delight) to bestow the highest praise that he could express upon the young Delaware's skill and courage; to which effusion of complimentary eloquence he replied, "My father, Wingenund has not seen many summers; he has no skill in speech, nor experience in council; but he knows that the Great Spirit loves a single tongue, and a true heart. Mahéga was cunning as a wolf, swift as a deer, strong as a bison-bull; but there was poison in his heart, and lies dwelt under his tongue, like snakes under a smooth stone. What is the end? The mountain-buzzards pick his bones; and when his children ask,—where is the grave of Mahéga? there shall be none to answer. My father, when the sun has risen, the treaty shall be made, the pipe of peace shall be smoked, and the Medicine of the White tent shall bring many good things to the Upsaroka."

Having thus spoken, Wingenund retired to the lodge of Besha; and the captive Black-feet having been placed under a guard, White-Bull remained in consultation with his father, while the other warriors soon forgot in sleep the fatigues of the past eventful day.

CHAPTER XLIV

Wingenund and his friends return towards their camp.—A serious adventure and a serious argument occur by the way.—Showing, also, how the extremes of grief, surprise, and joy may be crowded into the space of a few minutes.

The result of the consultation between White-Bull and his father was, that the terms of the treaty made with Wingenund should be strictly observed; but lest the ingenuous reader should be misled into the belief that this resolution was influenced by any considerations of good faith or honesty, it may be as well to inform him that the advantages and disadvantages of the two opposite courses were discussed with the most deliberate calculation, and the path of honour was at length selected upon the following grounds:—

First. It was expedient to make friends with the allied band, inasmuch as the latter were formidable enemies from their courage, skill, and equipment.

Secondly. They had many bales of cloth, blankets, and other goods, of which they would probably make liberal presents to their friends; and

Thirdly. The Crows having just incensed and triumphed over their hereditary foes the Black-feet, they might expect reprisals from the latter; in which event, the alliance of a band commanding upwards of twenty "medicine-fire-weapons," was not to be despised.

Having embraced this resolution, and communicated it by secret messengers to the principal braves and conjurers, the worthy sire and son summoned them to a grand council on the following morning, at which the treaty was ratified in due form; Wingenund, Paul Müller, and Ethelston representing the allied band, and each party loading the other with praises and compliments, until the oily tongue of Besha was almost weary of translating and retranslating their expressions of mutual amity and fidelity.

The four unhappy survivors of Mahéga's band were now brought forward, their arms being securely pinioned behind them, and Besha inquired of Wingenund his wishes concerning them. It needed only a word from his lips, and they would have been stabbed, burnt, or more slowly tortured to death on the spot. The youth looked at them sternly for a moment, and Paul Müller trembled lest the vengeful instinct of his race should guide his decision; but he replied, "Wingenund will take them with him to the Lenapé camp. War-Eagle, Netis, and the Black Father shall hold a council, and what they think best, it shall be done."

Ethelston Paul Müller and Wingenund now

prepared to bid adieu to their Crow friends, it having been agreed that White-Bull, accompanied by some of his principal braves, should visit the Delaware camp on the following day to interchange presents, and confirm the alliance thus happily and unexpectedly commenced; and as a further proof of his friendly disposition, the Crow chief permitted Bending-willow to send a girdle of delicate fawn-skin, adorned with feathers and stained quills, to the "Great Medicine of the white tent."

Wingenund had still kept possession of the three Osage rifles, one of which was in the hands of Ethelston, and the other two he now loaded, and offered one to Paul Müller.

"Nay, my son," said the Missionary, smiling, "these hands are not skilled in the use of the firelock; neither do they desire to be acquainted with any weapon more dangerous than this oaken staff. The shedding of human blood would ill beseem a humble minister of the Gospel of Peace."

"The words of the Black Father," said the youth respectfully, "are full of goodness and truth; but he must not forget that the path lies over rough and dangerous places; that there are four prisoners, who may attempt to overcome or escape from us, and that we may meet enemies by the way; therefore Wingenund wished to give the Black Father a weapon to defend himself."

"The motive my son, was natural and blameless; nevertheless, I purpose to abstain from handling any deadly weapon, and to entrust my personal safety to Him who has so marvellously preserved us through trials, captivity, and dangers innumerable. My children," continued the worthy man in the English tongue, "before we depart hence to revisit ourfriends, .et us together thank God for the great mercies shown unto us; let us implore his further protection for ourselves and all dear to us; and let us humbly entreat Him, in His own good time, to soften, turn, and enlighten the hearts of those benighted children of the wilderness, so that they may hereafter, with us, be brought to His heavenly kingdom."

As he said these words the venerable Missionary dropped upon his knees, Ethelston and Wingenund kneeling beside him, while he uttered a fervent prayer, which embraced, in simple yet eloquent language, all the objects above alluded to.

Great was the surprise of the Crows at the attitude of the three, and their sudden abstraction from all that was passing around, but Besha having whispered to the chief that they were talking to the Great Spirit, he made a signal that profound silence should be observed, fearful that if they were disturbed or anyways annoyed, they would invoke evil upon himself and his tribe.

The prayer was concluded, and they were about paying their farewell salutations to the chiefs, when the low wailing of a female voice from an adjoining lodge caught the Missionary's ear,—an ear to which the accents of distress ever found immediate entrance. Having desired Besha to enquire into the cause of her complaint, he learnt that she was the wife of the man *who had been struck down by Mahéga's war-club, after it had grazed* the cheek of Wingenund *and that her* husband was now lying in a state of great misery and suffering In spite of a gesture of impatience from the Delaware youth, whose feet burned to be upon the homeward path, the Missionary approached the sufferer, and carefully examined his condition. He found that the bones of the broken arm had been joined with tolerable skill and success, and that it was well secured by bandages to a straight splinter of pine-wood, but whether owing to the roughness of the treatment, or the pain he had undergone, he was now in a high and dangerous state of fever. The Missionary had still concealed in his girdle a small bag, containing, among other medicines, a few powders exactly adapted to the emergency; of these he mixed one with a little water, and having given it to his patient, left another with Besha, desiring that it might be administered at noon, and that no meat should be given to him until the following day. "With these remedies, and with the blessing of the Great Spirit," said he, as he retired, "the man will soon be well."

"Did I understand rightly," said Ethelston to Wingenund, "that White-Bull comes over to-morrow with his braves to complete the treaty with us, aud exchange presents."

"It is so settled," replied the youth.

"Would it not then be better to let him and his men bring with them the Crow prisoners, they are four desperate men, and only we two are armed; if they mutiny by the way, we shall be obliged to shoot them in self-defence."

"My brother does not know the Washushe and the Upsaroka," said Wingenund, smiling "both of them love the Pale-faces and the Lenapé as the wolf loves the deer. No, my brother, let the prisoners go with us; our eyes must be open; if they try to run away or do us harm, the rifle must keep them quiet."

The youth spoke these words in a low, determined tone, and Ethelston feeling that he could not gainsay their truth, listened while Wingenund repeated the warning to the Osages in their own tongue, informing them that if they made the slightest attempt at escape, or demonstration of violence by the way, they would be instantly shot; a sullen and silent inclination of the head, signifying that he was understood, was the only reply; and once more greeting their Crow allies, the little party moved off in the direction of the Delaware camp, Wingenund leading the way, with a loaded rifle in his hand, the Black-foot bow and quiver slung at his back, and a knife and pistol taken from one of the Osages, being fastened in his girdle; next came the four prisoners, with their arms still pinioned, but their legs entirely at liberty; Paul Müller and Ethelston brought up the rear; the latter carrying two loaded rifles, one in his hand, and the other slung over his shoulder.

It was a beautiful summer morning, the grey mists had arisen from the valley and curled in spiral folds round the rugged and precipitous rocks that frowned above it. Short and scant as was the herbage, still as it glistened in the early dew and hung forth its diamond drops in the sun, it imparted a touch of sweetness to scenery, the dreary barrenness of which might otherwise have oppressed the mind of the traveller with a feeling of desolation. Never, perhaps, over that, or over any other mountain track passed a lighter foot or a more rejoicing

heart than that of our young friend Wingenund. The dreams of boyhood, dreams that a few weeks ago he had himself deemed visionary, or at least remote, were already accomplished; he had won the gold spurs of Indian chivalry; in the dance, or the council, or the field, neither envy nor detraction could now forbid his mixing with the braves and warriors of his tribe; and his heart exulted within him as he thought of presenting to Netis and War-Eagle the scalp of their arch enemy, the insolent captor of Prairie-bird, the great warrior of the Osages, slain by his own hand. These were feelings which the boy-hero could share with none, for with Ethelston he was as yet little acquainted, and Paul Müller he knew to be averse to all thoughts of strife and conflict; still the feelings arose unchecked and unrepressed within his bosom when he remembered the name by which he was called, the deeds of those who had borne it before him; and mingled with these memories of the past came the proud reflection, that wherever the Delaware tongue was yet spoken among the scattered bands of the Ancient People on the banks of the Missouri and Ohio, of Susquehana and Miami, the song of Lenape warrior and Lenape maiden would tell how the scourge of their tribe, Mahéga, the Bloody-hand, had been slain by Wingenund, the brother of War-Eagle!

The events of the preceding days had been to the youth the realized romance of his life, and as he strode along the mountain-side, he felt as if his expanded chest were a world too narrow for the high emotions that swelled within it.

Perhaps it may seem unnatural to the reader that amidst all the excitement of awakened hope, ambition, and exultation, the youth forgot not for a moment the perils by which he was surrounded. It is our business to describe the Indian character, not as it might be, if designed "to point a moral or adorn a tale," but as it is, with all those lights and shades which distinguish it from that of white men; and one of the most remarkable features—one which has also escaped the observation of those writers who are chiefly quoted as authority on this subject—is that power of reserved abstraction which the mind of the Indian acquires as a result of an early and constant habit of control over the will. Thus, during the wildest flight of his imagination, and the highest aspirations of his ambitious hopes, under an excitement which would have rendered an English youth of his years blind, and deaf, and careless for a moment of all that was passing around, the quick eye of Wingenund roved with incessant motion from hill to vale, embracing every hollow that might contain an ambush, and every crag near his path that might give shelter to a foe.

Ethelston conversed little with the Missionary, for there was a thought which lay close to his heart, and made its pulses throb more quickly at every step that he made towards the Delaware camp. Already they were within a few miles of it when, in passing a streamlet that flowed across their path, Wingenund suddenly turned and proposed to his companions to refresh themselves with a drink.

Passing the Osages, he came back to Ethelston, and said to him, while the Missionary filled a small tin cup with water, "My brother's eyes have been shut, let him be ready now: one of the prisoners is free, and has almost cut the bands of a second."

Accustomed to dangers and emergencies, Ethelston did not start, nor take any outward notice of the young Delaware's observations, but he replied, "It is true, I have been heedless, but it is not too late to repair the error: seize him while he is drinking; I will secure the others; do not take life, if it can be avoided."

Wingenund took the hint and carried the cup round, offering a draught to each of the pinioned Osages, without appearing to notice the severed thong hanging from the wrist of the one who had freed himself.

Thus thrown off his guard, and thinking he was unsuspected, the Osage stooped to drink from the cup, when Wingenund seized him with his left hand, and, presenting a pistol to his breast, said to him, in his own tongue, "If you stir, you die."

Reckless of consequences, and despairing of mercy in the Delaware camp, the fierce Osage sprang upon the youth, and strove to wrench the pistol from his grasp. Being a powerful man, he might have succeeded in the attempt, had not a blow from the butt end of Ethelston's rifle laid him stunned and prostrate on the ground.

The three other prisoners, seeing their comrade's helpless condition, ceased from the violent efforts which they had been making to free themselves, and by the time that he had recovered from the effects of the blow, his arms were pinioned more strongly than before, and the thongs by which the others were fastened were re-examined and secured.

While engaged in this operation, Wingenund showed to Ethelston a sharp flint with which the Osage had cut his own bands, and had begun to separate those of his next comrade in the line of march; a few minutes more, and his hands would also have been free, in which case the task of our two friends would not have proved so easy.

Ethelston well understood Wingenund's meaning, as the latter showed him the half-cut thong on the wrist of the second Indian, and he said, "I confess I was blind, my young friend, and am ashamed of myself; you will have but a low opinion of my talents as a warrior."

"My brother's eye may have wandered a little," replied the youth, smiling, "because he is not skilled in the Washashe tricks; but his heart is in the right place, and his hand knows how to strike; a few suns will rise and set before the skull of that dog forgets what my brother bestowed upon it."

"It was time to strike hard, because I did not wish to strike twice. As I had requested you not to shoot, I felt that I had made myself answerable for your safety, and if that second fellow had succeeded in freeing his hands, we might have had some troublesome work of it. But tell me, Wingenund, how did you, while walking in front, discover what was passing behind you?"

"The Osage told me himself," replied the youth, again smiling.

"I do not understand you, for assuredly he never spoke."

"Not with his tongue, but plainly enough with

his face. I looked round once or twice, and my eye met his; I saw there was mischief, for he looked too good. When I passed to ask you for the cup, I looked again, quickly, but closer, and saw that his hands were free, though he kept them together as before."

Ethelston could not forbear laughing at the youth's notion of the ill-favoured Osage "looking too good," but feeling both amused and interested by his replies, he again said, "I must own my admiration of your quick-sightedness, for doubtless the Osage tried to make the expression of his face deceive you."

"He has not the face of an Indian warrior," said the youth, scornfully. "When a deed is to be done or concealed, let my brother try and read it in the face of War-Eagle, or any great chief of the Lenapé! As well might he strive to count the stones in the deepest channel of the great Muddy River,* or the stars of heaven in a cloudy night!"

The party had now struck a broad trail, leading across the valley, and up the opposite height, in the direction of the Delaware camp; the Osage prisoners were therefore sent to the front, and ordered to march forward on the trail, by which means Wingenund enjoyed the advantage of watching their movements, while he continued to converse with his friends.

"I own," said Ethelston, "that I had not before considered a command over the muscles of the countenance as being a matter of so much importance in the character of an Indian warrior."

"Nevertheless the youth is right in what he says," replied Paul Müller. "Where cunning and artifice are so often resorted to, a natural and unconcerned air of candour is an admirable shield of defence: the quickness of sight which you lately observed in Wingenund, is a hereditary quality in his race. The grandfather Tamenund was so celebrated for it, that he was called by a name signifying, 'The man who has eyes in his back:' he was killed only twenty years ago, during the fierce irruption made by a band of the five nations into the valley of Wyoming, to which the old man had retired in the hope of closing his eyes in peace."

"I have heard of that tragedy," said Ethelston; "indeed, it occurred while I was at school on the banks of the Muskingum; and often, as the boys went or returned, they used to frighten each other with cries of 'The Indians!' but I have since been much absent from my own country, and never rightly understood who were the actors in that scene of terror, and what were the tribes usually known by the name of the Six Nations, for so I have always heard them called."

"There were in fact only five," replied the Missionary; "for although the Tuscaroras joined the confederation, they did not originally belong to it. These five are known among white men by the following names: the Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas, and Senecas; and it was a band of the latter that made the irruption into the valley of Wyoming. I dare say that Wingenund knows more of them than I do, for he often heard Tamenund speak of them, and he knew their history like the traditions of his own tribe."

"Wingenund has not forgotten," replied the youth, "what his grandfather taught him concerning the Five Nations. The names spoken by the Black Father are those commonly given them; but they call themselves otherwise."

"Tell me, Wingenund," said Ethelston, "the names by which they are known among themselves!"

"The Mohawks are called Coningionah; the Oneidas, Oni-eut-kah—or, 'The people of the standing-stone;' the Cayugas, Senanda Wanandu-nah—'The people of the great pipe;' the Onondagas, Nundagekah—'People of the small hill;' the Senecas, Nundawâ-gah—'People of the big hill.' But the council name of the last is different."

"What do you mean by the council name?"

"Many of the nations have more than one name; and the council name is never spoken except by the chiefs and wise men in council; the women and boys seldom know it; and, if they do, they must not speak it."

"Did Tamenund tell you the council name of the Senecas?"

"Yes; it is Oni-hoout—'Those who shut the door;' because the Senecas live the furthest to the southwest, and guard the others from the approach of their enemies."*

"It always appeared to me," said Ethelston, turning to the Missionary, "that the variety and arbitrary alteration of Indian names present an insuperable barrier in the way of any inquiry into their national or local history."

"Certainly, my son; the difficulty is great, and proceeds from various causes:—First, because it is frequently, perhaps generally, the case among Indian nations, that the son takes the name of the mother, and not, as with us, that of the father. Secondly, there often are, as you have just learnt from Wingenund, two or three names by which the same person or tribe is designated. Thirdly, nothing is more common than for a warrior to receive a new name from any daring or remarkable feat that he may have performed, in which case his former name is dropped, and soon forgotten: and, lastly, it must be remembered, that we, Americans, Germans, and English, have obtained the greater part of our Indian nomenclature, both

* The Missouri is here alluded to, the ancient name of which, "Pekitanoui," signifies "muddy water," in the language of the Illinois, once a most powerful tribe, dwelling near its confluence with the Mississippi. They have since given a name to one of the states of the Union, but not one of the tribe survives at this day. Some antiquarians think that they were formerly a branch of the great nation of the Delawares (a supposition confirmed by the resemblance of their name, Il-lenni, to that of the Lenni—Lenapé); one half of which remained on the great prairies bordering the Mississippi, while the other half *overran, and finally occupied*, the greater portion of *country between the Ohio and the Atlantic*—*See Charlevoix &c.*

* These, and many other particulars respecting the Six Nations, the author had from the lips of a veteran, who was carried off as a child by the Senecas when they sacked Wyoming. He was adopted into their tribe, and lived with them the greater part of his life, during a portion of which he acted for them in the capacity of interpreter and Indian agent: afterwards he retired to spend a vigorous and green old age in the western part of the state of New-York. He always spoke with affectionate enthusiasm of his adopted kindred, and it was easy to see that the white man's blood in his veins circulated through an Indian heart. Those who wish to know more of the early history of the Five Nations, are referred to the accurate and interesting account given of them by Colden

as to persons and places, from the French; who, in the various capacities of possessors, adventurers, missionaries, voyageurs, hunters, and interpreters, have overrun almost the whole of this continent before us."

"Is it, then, your opinion that the French travellers and writers from whom these names have been chiefly derived, have been very careless and inaccurate in their transcription of them?"

"Extremely so. When they first reached and descended the Mississippi, they called it the 'Colbert;' afterwards on finding what a magnificent river it became when it received the waters of the Missouri, they called it 'La riviere St. Louis,' by which name it was known for many years, until insensibly it recovered its Indian appellation. When the adventurers came to any unknown tribe, they called them by some name descriptive of the accidental circumstances under which they first saw them, and these names they have ever since retained. Thus, the Winnebagoes in the north happened, when first visited, to be drying fish in their camp, and thence obtained the pleasant name by which they are now known, 'Les Puans!' Another band, some of whom had accidentally been scorched, by the prairie and underwood near their encampment taking fire, have ever since been called 'Les Bois-brulés;' another, 'Les Gros Ventres.'* The Dahcotah nation they have called 'Les Sioux;' the Aricara, 'Les Ris;' and so forth, until it is difficult, if not impossible, to recognize any of the original Indian names under their French disguise."

"I grant this," said Ethelston. "Yet we must not forget that the English have in several instances laid themselves open to the same charge; otherwise the great nation to which our young friend belongs would not have been called after a Norman baron! But you will surely allow that the early French missionaries in North America were men of great piety, learning, and enterprise?"

"It is true, my son, many of them were so; and none can feel more grateful than I do to such of them as laboured sincerely in the service of the Gospel. Yet I am bound to say, that in the best authorised account which they sent to France from Natchez of the surrounding country,† there is so much pedantry, prejudice, and fancy, mingled with highly interesting information, that the book cannot be quoted as one possessing historical authority. A writer who gravely infers that the Mississippi Indians came from the north-eastern straits, from the identity of the Choctaws with the people of Kamchâktâ (or Royaume des Chactas), must expect that some of his other arguments and speculations should be received with diffidence.—But see, we have reached the summit of this range, and Wingenund's sparkling eye is already fixed upon the tent of Prairie-bird"

"There it is!" said the youth; "They have moved it since I came away, and placed it on that point nearer the stream."

Little did he suspect what had occurred during his brief absence, as, with a foot light and elastic as his heart, he put himself at the head of his little party, and led the way swiftly towards the camp.

As the party drew near the camp they fell in with the out-piquet on guard in that quarter, consisting of one of the Delaware braves and two of his men, to whom Wingenund entrusted his Osage prisoners, adding, "Give them water and food, but let them not escape."

The brave look full in the face of the youth, then his eye roved from the scalp at his belt to the pinioned Osages, and a grim smile played across his features; but they almost instantly relapsed into the grave and gloomy expression that they had before worn; not another word was spoken, and the three passed on towards the white tent. As they drew near, they saw a group of hunters, among whom were Pierre and Bearskin, sitting round a smouldering fire, some smoking, and others engaged in mending their moccasins or cleaning their pistols and rifles. There was neither joke nor song amongst them; and although they started up to welcome their rescued and returning friends, the latter perceived that something was wrong, and it was with aching and foreboding hearts that they returned the friendly greeting, and passed onward towards the tent, before which they saw Reginald and Baptiste in earnest conversation.

Reginald no sooner saw them, than he sprang forward to embrace Ethelston, exclaiming, "God be praised for this great and unexpected comfort!"

Ethelston looked in his friend's face; and its expression confirming his apprehensions, his lip grew pale and trembled; he gasped for breath, as, pressing Reginald's hand within his own, he said, "Speak—speak! tell me what has happened?" then pointing to the tent, he added, "Is she safe?—is she well?"

"She is safe—she is well!" replied Reginald; "Nevertheless—"

Ethelston heard no more, but a deep groan relieved the oppression of his heart, as he ejaculated, "Blessed be the God of Mercies!" and covering his face with his hands, stood for a moment in silence.

Reginald was surprised at this extraordinary emotion in his friend, usually so composed and calm, and at the deep interest that he took in one whom, although betrothed to his intended brother-in-law, he had not yet seen. But he added, gravely, "God knows, my dear friend, that my gratitude is not less fervent than yours. Precious as her life is, it has however been ransomed at a price dearer to me than aught else on earth besides herself. Wingenund," he continued, addressing the youth and affectionately taking his hand, "you are the son of a race of heroes; is your heart firm? are you prepared to suffer the griefs that the Great Spirit thinks fit to send?"

The youth raised his dark eyes to the speaker's face; and subduing by a powerful effort the prescient agony of his soul, he said in a low tone, "Let Netis speak on; the ears of Wingenund are ready to hear what the Great Spirit has sent."

"Dear Wingenund, alas! War-Eagle, our beloved brother is—"

"Dead!" interrupted the youth letting the butt of his rifle fall heavily to the ground.

* The Minnetarees.
† The celebrated 'Lettres Edifiantes"

"Nay, not yet dead, perhaps worse than dead; for he is hurt beyond all hope of cure, yet suffers torture such as none but himself could endure without complaint."

It was fearful for those who stood by to witness the agonising struggle of emotions that convulsed the frame of the young Delaware on receiving this announcement; for War-Eagle had been to him not only a brother, but father, companion, and friend, the object on whom all the affections of his young heart had been concentrated with an intensity almost idolatrous; yet even in the extremity of anguish he forgot not the rude yet high philosophy of his race and nature; he could not bear that any human eye should witness his weakness, or that any white man should be able to say that Wingenund, the last of the race of Tamenund, had succumbed to suffering. Terrible was the internal conflict; and while it was yet uncertain how it might end, his hand accidentally rested upon his belt, and his fingers closed upon the scalp of Mahéga; instantly, as if by magic, the grief of the loving brother was crushed by the stoic pride of the Indian warrior.

"War-Eagle is not dead; his eyes shall look upon the scalp of his great enemy slain by the hand which he first taught to use a bow; and when he goes to the hunting-fields of the brave, our fathers may ask him, 'Where is the scalp of the destroyer of our race?'" Such were the thoughts that shot like wild-fire through the brain and through the breast of the young Delaware, as, with a countenance almost haughty in its expression, he drew up his graceful form to its full height, saying, "Where is War-Eagle? Wingenund would see him. Let the Black Father go too; perhaps his healing skill might avail."

"I will not deceive you, dear Wingenund; no human skill can avail our departing friend. He is now within the tent; Prairie-bird watched with him all the night; she spoke to him often words from God's own book, and they seemed to comfort him, for he smiled, and said he would gladly hear more. She has retired to take a few hours' sleep, then she will return and resume her sad but endearing task."

"Wingenund will go to him; but first let Netis say whence the wounds of War-Eagle came. Have enemies been near the camp?"

With the eloquence of deep feeling Reginald briefly related the circumstances attending War-Eagle's devoted and heroic defence of Prairie-bird from the bears.

Ethelston and Paul Müller listened with suspended breath, and as he concluded exclaimed together, "Noble, brave, and generous War-Eagle!" while the youth, pressing his lips together as if steeling his breast against softer impressions, said, in a low tone, "'Twas well done; few are the warriors whose single knife has reached the heart of a grisly bear. Let us go on to the tent."

Reginald led the way, and, lifting the flap, entered, followed by Ethelston, Wingenund, and Paul Müller.

The chief was seated in the centre, propped *by bales of cloth* and fur; his sunken eye was *closed from sleeplessness* and exhaustion, and *a blanket loosely thrown over* his shoulders, covered the emaciated remains of his once powerful and athletic frame. At his side lay his favourite pipe, his war-club, knife, and rifle; while the faithful Lita, stretched at his feet, strove in vain to restore their natural warmth, by applying to them hot stones enveloped in the shreds of a blanket, which she had torn up for the purpose. The entrance of the party was not unmarked by the wounded chief, and a smile passed over his wasted features when he unclosed his eyes, and recognised Wingenund and the two others whom he had rescued from the Crows.

"The Black Father is welcome," he said, in a faint but cheerful voice, "and so is the friend of Netis; and War-Eagle is glad to see the face of his brother Wingenund."

We have seen how the youth had, by a desperate effort, nerved himself to bear, without giving way, the description of his brother's wounds and hopeless condition; yet, when the feeble tones of that loved voice thrilled upon his ear, when his eye fell upon the wasted frame, and when he saw written upon that noble countenance proofs not to be mistaken, of torture endured, and death approaching, the string which had refused to be relaxed started asunder, and he fell senseless to the ground, while a stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

Half-raising himself by the aid of his yet unwounded arm, War-Eagle made a vain effort to move towards his young brother, and his eye shone with something of its former eager lustre, as he said, in a voice louder than he was deemed capable of uttering, "Let the Black Father lend his aid and skill to the youth; he is the last leaf on the Unâmi branch; dear is his blood to the Lenapé."

"Dearer to none than to me," said the Missionary, raising and supporting the unconscious youth, "for to him I owe my liberty, perhaps my life. 'Tis only the rupture of a small blood-vessel; fear not for him, my brave friend, he will soon be better."

While Paul Müller, assisted by one of the Delawares who stood at the entrance of the tent, carried the youth into the open air, and employed the restoratives which his experience suggested, the chief mused upon the words which he had last heard, and inquired, addressing himself to Reginald, "What said the Black Father of his life and liberty being given by Wingenund?"

"Tell the Chief, Ethelston, what has befallen, and how you and Paul Müller were rescued by Wingenund. In my deep anxiety for my suffering friend, I was satisfied with seeing that you had returned in safety, and never inquired how you escaped."

Ethelston drew near to the wounded chief, so that he might distinctly hear every syllable spoken, and said, "War-Eagle, as surely as Prairie-bird owes her life and safety to your devoted courage, so surely do the Father and I owe our lives and liberty to that of Wingenund. Can you listen now, and follow me while I tell you all that has happened?"

The chief gave a silent nod of assent, and Ethelston proceeded, in the simple language of true feeling, to relate to him the events recorded in the last chapter. At the commencement of the narrative the chief, expecting, probably

that the escape had been effected by some successful disguise or stratagem, closed his eyes, as if oppressed by the torturing pains that shot through his frame; but he opened them with awakened interest when the scene of the council was described, and at the mention of Mahéga's name he ejaculated "Ha!" his countenance assumed a fierce expression, and his hand unconsciously grasped the war-club that lay beside him.

Reginald listened with deep interest, and even Lita, who had hitherto appeared insensible to everything except the sufferings of her beloved lord, threw back the long hair from her eyes, marvelling what this might be that so excited and revived him; but when Ethelston related the catastrophe, how Mahéga had thrown his club, slightly grazing the youth, and how the latter had, in presence of the assembled Crows, killed and scalped the great Osage, the breast of the Delaware warrior heaved with proud emotions, which quelled for the moment all sense of the pains that racked his frame; his eye lightened with the fire of other days, and, waving the war-club over his head, he shouted, for the last time, the war-cry of his tribe.

As the chief fell back exhausted upon his rude pillow, the gentle voice of Prairie-bird was heard from the adjoining compartment of the tent, calling Lita to explain the meaning of the loud and unexpected cry by which she had been aroused from her slumber. Lita withdrew; and, while her mistress made her rapid and silent toilet, informed her of the safe return of the Black Father and Wingenund, and that the latter having been seized with a sudden illness, the friend of Reginald had remained by the chief, and had communicated some intelligence, which seemed to affect him with the most extravagant joy and excitement.

So anxious was the maiden to see her beloved preceptor, and so hastily did she fold the kerchief in the form of a turban round her head, that several of her dark tresses escaped from beneath it, and fell over her neck. The first dress that came to her hand was one made from a deep-blue Mexican shawl, of ample dimensions, given to her by the Missionary. Fastening this round her slender waist with an Indian girdle, and a pair of moccasins upon her delicate feet, she went forth, catching up as she left the tent a scarf, which she threw carelessly over her shoulders. Greeting War-Eagle hastily, but affectionately, as she passed, she flew with a glowing cheek and beating heart to the spot where the Missionary still bent with anxious solicitude over the reviving form of Wingenund.

"My father—my dear father!" she exclaimed, seizing his hand; "God be praised for thy safe return!"

The venerable man embraced her tenderly, and, after contemplating for a moment her countenance beaming with filial affection, he placed his outspread hands upon her head, saying, with impressive solemnity, "May the blessing of God rest upon thee, my beloved child, and upon all near and dear to thee, for ever!"

Prairie-bird bowed her head meekly while breathing a silent amen to the holy man's benediction, and then turned to inquire of her young mother how he now felt, and of Paul Müller the cause of his sudden illness.

Wingenund was sufficiently recovered to speak to her gratefully in reply, and to press the hand which she held out to him, but he was much reduced by loss of blood, and the Missionary putting his finger to his lips enjoined him quiet and silence for the present. He continued, however, in a low voice to explain to her the strange events that had lately occurred, and how he and the friend of her betrothed owed to the heroism of Wingenund their life and liberty.

While the maiden listened with absorbed attention, every passage in the brief but eventful tale was legible on her eloquent countenance. As Reginald stood at a little distance gazing earnestly upon its changeful loveliness, he was startled by a suppressed ejaculation from some one at his side, at the same time that his arm was seized and pressed with almost convulsive force. He turned and saw his friend Ethelston, who, finding that War-Eagle had fallen into a tranquil sleep, had stolen out of the tent to the side of Reginald, where he first caught a sight of the maiden as she listened to the Missionary's narrative. Reginald again observed with astonishment that his friend, usually so calm, trembled from head to foot; his eye rested upon the group with a preternatural fixedness, and his lips moved inaudibly like those of a man scarcely recovered from a trance. "Gracious heaven! what can have happened! Edward, *you* are not surely ill! that would indeed fill the cup of our trials to the brim. Speak to me, let me hear your voice, for your looks alarm me."

Ethelston made no reply, but he pointed with his finger towards Prairie-bird, and two or three large tear-drops rolled down his cheek.

While this was passing, Paul Müller had brought his tale to a conclusion, and his eye happening to light upon Ethelston, he continued (still addressing Prairie-bird), "And now, my dear child, it only remains for me to tell you the cause of our beloved young brother's weakened condition. The extremes of joy and of anguish will sometimes sweep before them the mightiest bulwarks that can be raised in the heart of man by his own unaided strength. Wingenund opposed to the stroke of affliction sent from on high not the meek, trusting endurance of Christian resignation, but the haughty resistance of human pride. Already he sees and repents his error, and the mist is clearing away from his eyes; but you, my dear child, have been better taught; you have learnt, in all trials and in all emergencies, to throw yourself upon the mercy of your heavenly Father, and to place your whole trust in His gracious promises of protection. We are more apt to forget this duty when our cup overflows with joy than when his chastening hand is upon us; but it should not be so. Promise me, then, promise me, my beloved child, that in weal or in woe, in the rapture of joy as in the extremity of sorrow, you will strive to remember and practise it."

Awed by the unusual solemnity of his manner the maiden bowed her head, and said, "I promise."

Scarcely had she said these words when Reginald came forward, leading his friend Ethelston who had by a strong effort recovered from his extreme agitation, and regained something of his usual composure. "Prairie-bird," said Reginald, "I wish to make known to you my most

faithful companion, my tried and attached friend Ethelston. You must love him now for my sake; when you know him, you will do so for his own own."

Leaning on the Missionary's arm, the maiden raised herself from her stooping posture to greet the friend of her betrothed. "I have heard much——" she said, with her sweet natural dignity of manner; but she suddenly stopped, starting as if she had seen a ghost, and clinging closer to Paul Müller's arm, while her earnest gaze encountered the eyes of Ethelston fixed upon her with an expression that seemed to shake the nerves and fibres of her heart. To Reginald their silence and agitation was an incomprehensible mystery; not so to the Missionary, who still supported Prairie-bird, and whispered to her as she advanced a step nearer to the stranger, "Your promise." She understood him, for he heard her breathe the Almighty's name, as Ethelston also advanced a step towards her; and again their looks dwelt upon each other with a fixed intensity that spoke of thoughts too crowded, and confused, and mysterious for expression. At length Ethelston, whose strong and well-balanced mind had triumphed over the first shock of emotion, addressed the maiden, saying, "Have the latter years been so happily spent that they have quite banished from the mind of Prairie-bird the memory of early days?"

At the sound of his voice the maiden started as if she had received an electric shock; her bosom heaved with agitation, and her eyes filled with tears.

Again the Missionary whispered, "Your promise!" while Ethelston continued, "Has she forgotten her own little garden with the sundial? and poor Mary who nursed, and dressed, and taught her to read? Has she forgotten the great bible full of prints, of which she was so fond; and the green lane that led to Mooshanne? Has Evy forgotten her Edward?"

"'Tis he—'tis he! 'tis Eddy! my own, my long-lost brother!" cried the maiden aloud, as she threw herself into his arms; and looking up into his face, she felt his cheek as if to assure herself that all was not a dream, and poured out her grateful heart in tears upon his bosom. She did remember her promise, and even in the first tumult of her happiness, she sought and derived from Him to whom she owed it, strength to endure its sudden and overwhelming excess.

"'Tis even so," said the Missionary, grasping the astonished Reginald's arm, "for some time I had suspected that such was the case; Prairie-bird, my beloved pupil, and your betrothed bride, is no other than Evelyn Ethelston, the sister of your friend. My suspicions were confirmed and almost reduced to certainty, during the first conversations that I held with him in St. Louis; for he, being several years older than you, remembered many of the circumstances attending the disappearance and supposed destruction of his little sister by the Indians, when his father's house was ravaged and burnt. I foresaw that they must meet when he left the settlements in search of you, and though I prepared him for the interview, I thought it better to say nothing to her or to you, *but to leave the recognition to the powerful voice of Nature.* You see the result in that fraternal embrace, and I have in a little bag, given to me by Tamenund, when at the point of death, proofs of her identity that would convince a sceptic, were you disposed to be one; the cover of a child's spelling book, in which her name is written at length (possibly by Ethelston) and a little kerchief with the initials E. E. in the corner, both of which were in her hand when she was carried off by the Indians who spared and preserved her."

While the Missionary felt beneath the folds of his dark serge robe, for the bag which he had always carefully kept suspended by a ribbon from his neck, Reginald's memory was busy in recalling a thousand indistinct recollections of early days, and in comparing them with those of a more recent date.

"Well do I remember," he exclaimed, "missing my sweet little playmate in childhood! and how all allusion to the terrible calamity that befel our nearest neighbour and friend, was forbid in our family! Scarcely ever, even in later years, have I touched upon the subject with Ethelston, for I saw that it gave him pain, and brought a cloud over his brow. Now, I can understand the wild and troubled expression that came across her countenance when she first saw me near the Osage camp, and first heard my voice, and how she started, and afterwards recovered herself, when I told her of Mooshanne! How blind have I now been to everything save her endearing qualities, and the ten thousand graces that wait upon her angelic form! See how like they are, now that a tide of feeling is poured into the countenance of my steady and composed friend! Jealous as I am of her time, and of every grain of her affection, I must not grudge them a few minutes of undisturbed intercourse after a separation of so many years! Come, worthy Father, let us employ ourselves in tending and ministering to War-Eagle and Wingenund, and let us not forget that to them, next to Heaven, we are indebted for the life and happiness of every single member of our miraculously re-united circle."

"You have a warm and a kindly heart, my young friend," said the Missionary, "and that is a blessing without which all the other blessings of Heaven may fall like showers upon the Lybian desert. I know how you must long to pour out your feelings of affection on this occasion to your friend, and to your betrothed; but, believe me, you will not have done amiss by following the first promptings of your heart. Let us, as you propose, endeavour to soothe and comfort the sufferers. Wingenund is now sufficiently recovered to listen while you relate to him these strange occurrences; only caution him not to speak too much at present. I will return to the side of War-Eagle, and although it be too late now for us to attempt any remedy for his bodily pains, who shall limit the power of the Almighty, or circumscribe the operation of his hands? Who knows whether He may not think fit, even at the eleventh hour, to touch that stern and obdurate heart with a coal from his altar? And, oh! my dear young friend, if such be his blessed purpose, I would not forego the privilege of being the humble instrument in effecting it, for all the wealth, the honours, the happiness, that earth can bestow."

Reginald looked after the worthy Missionary until he disappeared within the tent; then, sighing heavily, he said to himself, "If zeal, honesty, and true piety can render any human means available, assuredly that excellent and holy man's attempt will not be made in vain; and yet I fear that nothing short of a miracle can soften or subdue the stern pride of War-Eagle's spirit. How deeply anxious do I feel for the issue! for I cannot forget that it was in defence of Prairie-bird that he incurred this fearful torture, ending in an untimely death! His life sacrificed that mine might be happy with her! Where, where, my generous Indian brother, shall I find, among the cities and crowded haunts of civilized men, truth, self-denial, and devoted affection like thine! At least I will strive to fulfil the wish that I know to be nearest thy heart, by cherishing in my bosom's core thy beloved brother Wingenund!"

Thus meditating, Reginald sat down by the young Delaware, and strove, by awakening his interest in the strange events lately brought to light respecting Prairie-bird, to wean him from the deep dejection caused by his brother's hopeless plight.

CHAPTER XLV.

Containing a treaty between the Crows and Delawares, and the death of an Indian chief.

It is unnecessary to describe at length the occupations of the party during the remainder of this eventful day; how the re-united brother and sister called up a thousand long-stored, endearing remembrances; how they looked upon the childish relics preserved by the Missionary; and how, after interchanging a rapid but interesting sketch of each other's history, they turned again to share with him and with Reginald the melancholy and affecting duty of attending upon the dying chieftain. His sufferings were now less acute, but mortification had extended itself rapidly, and threatened hourly to terminate them altogether, by seizing upon the vitals. His mind seemed tranquil and collected as ever, only the watchful Missionary, observing that he listened more attentively to the voice of Prairie-bird than to any other, he yielded his place beside the dying man to her, entreating her to spare no efforts that might lead him, by the appointed path, to the Fountain of Mercy.

Willingly did the maiden resume the task on which she had been employed during the greater part of the preceding night; and after praying fervently for a blessing on her labours, she proceeded to explain to him again, in his own language, some of the simplest and most affecting truths of the gospel dispensation.

What an interesting spectacle for the contemplation of a Christian philosopher! A heathen warrior, whose youth had been matured with tales of fierce reprisal and revenge, whose path in life had been marked with blood, war being at once his pleasure and his pride, stretched now upon the ground, still in the prime of manhood, yet with shortening breath and ebbing strength, listening with deep attention to the words of hope and consolation pronounced by the lips of her who had been, through life, the secretly treasured idol of his heart. Perhaps this earthly love, purified as it had long been from passion, and ennobled by the sacrifice that he had made to friendship, was the channel through which the mysterious influences of the Divine Spirit were appointed to flow; for his eager ear lost not a word of what she uttered, and his heart was softened to receive from her lips truths against which, if delivered by another, its early prejudices might have rebelled.

Partly by the religious creed of his race, and partly by former conversations with herself and the Missionary, he was already impressed with a just view of the principal attributes of Deity—his omnipotence, goodness, and eternity. The chief endeavour of Prairie-bird was now to convince him that the God of the Christians addressed the same word, the same promises and invitations, to the Indians as to them, and that they also were included in the vast and mysterious scheme of redemption; for this purpose she translated for him, into the Delaware tongue, some of those magnificent passages in Isaiah wherein the Amighty, after declaring this unity and irresistible power, sends forth his gracious promises to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the isles, to the wilderness, to the inhabitants of the mountains, and those that dwell among the rocks, and concludes with the assurance, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

War-Eagle listened attentively, and gave the whole strength of his mind to the consideration of the subject propounded; some of these truths he had heard before, but they had taken no fixed root, and had rather been dismissed unheeded, than weighed and rejected. Now they presented themselves under a very different aspect; for they were pressed upon him with the most affectionate earnestness, by the one whom he looked up to as the most gifted and the most guileless of human beings; and the Black Father also, for whom he entertained the highest esteem and regard, had told him repeatedly that every truth, everything necessary for happiness after death, was written in that book from which she was now reading; that it was, in short, the written command of Him whom he had from his youth addressed as the Great Spirit.

Deeply moved by these reflections (aided as they may perhaps have been by the operations of a mightier influence), the chief propounded to his young instructress several inquiries, which it rejoiced her to hear, as they indicated a softened and teachable spirit. Neither were they difficult for her to answer, as she was familiar with almost every page of the volume before her, and thus knew where to seek at once a solution of every doubt and difficulty that occurred to her simple-minded and ingenuous patient.

While she was engaged in this interesting and truly Christian task, Reginald, Ethelston, and the Missionary sate with Wingenund, and strove to soothe and tranquillise the agitation into which the late disaster had thrown him. Although somewhat weakened by loss of blood, he had recovered his faculties both of body and mind; but all the well-meant endeavours of his friends to raise him from the deep depression of spirits into which he had fallen were exerted in

vain. He replied gently, and without petulance, to various questions that they put to him, and then sank again into desponding gloom, musing over the fading fortunes of his family and of his tribe —now about to lose him who was the pride, the support, and the glory of both.

After several unsuccessful attempts, Ethelston touched at length upon a topic which had in some degree the effect of arresting his attention and engaging the more active powers of his mind; for on reminding the youth that the Crows were to visit the camp on the morrow to interchange presents and conclude the treaty of peace, Wingenund proposed to Reginald that he should summon Baptiste and Pierre, and concert, with their advice, the course that it might be advisable to pursue.

While they were employed in considering and discussing deliberately the various plans proposed, Paul Müller and Prairie-bird continued sometimes together, and sometimes alternately, their attendance upon War-Eagle, whose strength was rapidly declining, although his intellect remained clear and unimpaired. Food he was unable to taste; but the grateful smile with which he received now and then a cup of water from the hand of Prairie-bird touched her sensibly; and there was a serene composure upon his countenance, which encouraged her to hope that his mind was in a peaceful frame, and that thoughts of war and strife were gradually giving place to better and holier meditations.

The sun went down, evening fell, and the darkening hours of night found the maiden still unwearied at her post, seizing, with instinctive tact, every opportunity offered by his inquiries or remarks for quoting to him from the Book of Life some appropriate and consoling truth; nor did she retire to rest until she felt assured that exhausted nature had extended the boon of slumber to her suffering patient.

Not even then did the faithful Lita quit the place that she had chosen at the feet of the warrior whom she had so long worshipped in secret; noticed or unnoticed, thanked or unthanked, whether hungry, or thirsty, or sleepless, all was the same to her. In life her love had been either unknown or despised; and now the last faint glimmerings of hope were to be extinguished, without even the wretched consolation of pity. During the watches of that night there were tears upon the pillow of Prairie-bird; the eyes of Wingenund were sleepless, and his heart loaded with sorrow. Sharp and frequent were the pangs and shooting-pains that broke the rest of the departing Chief; yet was there, perhaps, none amongst them all whose sufferings were not light in comparison with the silent and hopeless anguish of the Comanche girl.

The morning dawned with all the fresh beauty of summer in that mountain region; and, agreeably to the resolution formed at the council held on the preceding evening, the whole party was summoned to parade with their best arms and accoutrements, so as to produce upon the Indians a due impression of their formidable strength, at the same time that various bales were unpacked, from which were selected the presents intended for the principal chiefs and braves.

No great change had taken place in the state of War-Eagle, but Wingenund had spent an hour with him alone; during which, among other subjects of greater importance, he had mentioned the expected visit of the Crows, and the conditions of the treaty which it was proposed to make with them. To these the Chief had given his assent, and had deputed his young brother to act in his stead; after which he turned again with renewed eagerness and anxiety to the subjects suggested to him by Prairie-bird and the Missionary.

The sun was not very high in the heaven, when the band of Crows were seen descending the hill towards the encampment. They were led by White-Bull, accompanied by Besha, and were only twelve in number, all magnificently clad in dresses of deer-skin, ornamented with coloured feathers, stained quills, scalp-locks, and the other adjuncts of Crow chivalry. Besha apologised for the scantiness of the deputation, stating, that during the past night an attempt had been made by the Blackfeet to rescue their prisoners; and although it had not been successful, the Crows could not venture, in the neighbourhood of such dangerous foes, to weaken the defence of their camp, by sending away a large body of its best warriors. To this a suitable and complimentary reply having been made, the business of the day commenced by presenting food to the Upsaroka guests.

A circle having been made, the white hunters were ranged on one side of it, and the Delawares on the other, the former being all armed with rifles and pistols, and hunting-knives, presented a very warlike appearance; while the sinewy and weather-beaten frames of the latter, armed as they were with rifle, war-club, and scalp-knife, inspired the observant leader of the Crows with no wish to bring his band into hostile collision with such a party. In the centre were seated Reginald Brandon, Wingenund, and Ethelston, Pierre having taken his place near the latter, and Baptiste occupying his usual station beside his young master, and leaning upon his enormous hatchet. If the intentions of White-Bull were treacherous, he found no greater encouragement to his hopes from a survey of the leaders, men of powerful form, and grave, determined aspect, with the exception of Wingenund, whose youth and slight figure might have led a stranger to fear him less as an opponent. He had, however, given such proof of his skill, courage, and activity in Indian warfare, that the Crows did not look upon him with less respect than upon the more experienced men by whom he was surrounded.

When the Upsaroka deputation had finished the portion of bison-meat set before them, Reginald gave them a treat, such as they had never before enjoyed, in the shape of a tin-cup full of coffee, sweetened with sugar, which they passed round, and tasted at first with some reluctance, owing to its dark colour, taking it for "Great Medicine." After sipping it once or twice, however, they seemed to find it more palatable, and drank all that was offered to them, and then the pipe was lighted and smoked with due solemnity.

When these preliminaries were concluded, the business of the day was entered upon, and was conducted with equal caution and distrust

on both sides; Besha being, of course, the interpreter and moulding the respective communications in the manner most likely, according to his views, to ensure the continuance of the truce agreed upon; because he had been most distinctly warned by Wingenund, that he would receive no present until all the terms of the treaty were duly fulfilled, and that then he might expect one liberal enough to adorn the wigwam of a chief. The crafty horse-dealer had, at the same time, contrived to persuade the Crows that the white men were secretly disinclined to the treaty, and that they could only be induced to observe it by his own cunning and contrivance.

This being the relative position of the parties, it may well be imagined that the diplomatic arrangements were neither very long nor difficult, and it was finally agreed that the Crows should, when called upon, supply the party with a trusty guide, who should lead them eastward by the route on which they would find the easiest travelling and the best supply of bison; that an alliance for mutual defence should exist between the parties so long as they were within the boundaries of the Crow country, but that they should never encamp nearer to each other than at a distance of twice the long-flight of an arrow; that so soon as they should emerge from the defiles of the mountains, the Crows should supply their allies with twenty horses, some of those which they had brought from the settlements being travel-worn and exhausted; and that Besha was to have free leave to come and go from one encampment to the other at all hours of the day or night, in the event of any communication being necessary.

The allied band agreed, in consideration of the above conditions, to present the Crows with a certain number of bales of cloth, a score of blankets, and an ample supply of beads, paint, and knives; one-third of the amount to be paid on the delivery of the horses, and the remainder when the parties separated on the Great Prairie, at the eastern boundary of the Upsaroka country.

These terms having been written down by Reginald, he read them slowly one after the other, Wingenund repeating them to Besha, and he again translating them to White-Bull, who nodded his approbation as they were successively recapitulated, after which Reginald and Ethelston having signed their names in pencil, desired Besha and White-Bull to affix their mark.

The former did so without hesitation, but the latter made all kinds of excuses, and looked extremely puzzled, whispering his doubts and fears to his interpreter, who, being a reckless fellow, and, having seen more of the world, could scarce forbear laughing in his face.

In truth the Crow chief, though brave and daring in the field, was not above the superstitions current in his tribe, and he entertained a kind of vague notion that, by putting his mark upon the paper, he brought himself under the power of the white-man's medicine.

Nevertheless, he was at length persuaded, and drew upon the paper, with a hand not unskilful, the broad forehead and projecting horns of a bison's head, which design represented his consent to the treaty.

No sooner was the business concluded than the presents were brought forth, and distributed according to the terms prescribed, Reginald adding for the chief a hair-brush, in the back of which a small mirror was set. Never had such a curiosity been seen in the Crow country, and White-Bull turned it over and over in his hand, contemplating it and himself in it, with undisguised satisfaction, while Pierre whispered to Baptiste, "if Madame Bending-willow is in favour, she will have it before to-morrow!"

The Crows now took their leave, amid many protestations of friendship on both sides, and returned with all speed towards their own encampment, White-Bull's mind being divided between delight at the possession of his brush, and dread at the mysterious dangers he might have incurred by putting his mark upon the white man's paper.

The departure of their wild allies left the party at the camp leisure to return to their ordinary avocations, and to the sad recollection of their Chief's condition; indeed, a very short time elapsed before he sent a message by Paul Müller desiring that they would all come to him without delay.

The tone of deep, yet composed sadness, in which it was delivered, announced to most of those who heard it that War-Eagle was drawing near to his end; and Reginald, passing his arm within that of Wingenund, whispered to him as he went such words of sympathy as he thought most like to soothe and console him.

"Dear Netis," replied the youth, in a tone of the deepest melancholy, "you are very good, but there is no happiness more for Wingenund!"

"Say not so, my young brother; you are still in the early spring of life, and I hope, when these present sorrows are past, you will yet enjoy a long and happy day of summer."

"Wingenund's spring and summer are both gone! but he does not complain; it is the will of the Great Spirit, and Wingenund knows that what He does is right."

As he said these words they reached the tent, and the day being extremely fine the poles of that compartment were taken up, and the canvass folded back, at the request of the Chief, that he might once more look upon the sun, and feel the fresh mountain breeze upon his cheek.

Lita had retired into the inner tent, and Prairie-bird was seated at his side, a cup of water being the only source of relief to which she from time to time had recourse to cool his lips and recruit his ebbing strength.

The whole party being gathered round him, Wingenund, Reginald, and Ethelston somewhat in advance of the rest, he addressed the former in a low but distinct voice, saying, "War-Eagle is going on the dark path, from which he will not return; Wingenund will be the chief of the Lenapé band; has he anything to say while War-Eagle is yet Chief?"

"He has," replied the youth in a voice tremulous from emotion; "a treaty has been made with the Upsaroka, does War-Eagle think it good?" He then proceeded to enumerate its several terms and conditions.

"It is good," said the Chief, after a few moments reflection; "only let Netis and Winge

sund remember that the Upsaroka are double-tongued; they hate the Blackfeet, and will be glad to spend my brother's powder and blood in destroying their enemies. Let my brothers keep near the home-path, and not wander from it to please the Upsaroka. Is there more that my brother wishes to say?"

"There is my brother. Here are the four Osage captives taken among the Upsaroka. Their deeds of blood are known to War-Eagle; let him say what shall be done with them."

"Let them stand forward," said the Chief, raising himself with difficulty from the blanket-cushion against which he had been reclining.

They were accordingly brought to the front of the circle, and stood awaiting their doom with the fierce determined air of warriors who knew and feared it not. The eldest among them was a fine powerful man, who bore about him the marks of many a fray, and had been one of the leading braves who followed the fortunes of Mahéga. He it was who acted as spokesman in the dialogue that ensued.

War-Eagle. "Have the Washashe anything to say that their lives should not be given to the slow fire?"

Osage. "The warriors of the Washashe talk with their hands, when their hands are not tied. They are not famous for their tongues."

W. "Yet with their tongues they spoke smooth words to the Lenapé; they called them brother; they ate, hunted, fought, and smoked with them, and then joined the Dahcotahs, to kill the women and children of their friends. If the tongues of the Washashe are not famous, they are forked."

O. "Mahéga was the war-chief of his tribe; when he went upon the war-path, the Washashe followed. He is gone to the hunting-fields of the braves, and they are not afraid to follow him. When War-Eagle took his rifle and his club, and went out upon the war-path by night, his warriors followed in silence. Who among them sa.d, 'Where does War-Eagle go?'"

W. "War-Eagle never raised his rifle at a friend; he never called out his braves to burn the wigwam of his brother; there was never a scalp of woman or child taken by his hand. When he struck, it was at an open foe, or to save or avenge a friend," he added, in a subdued tone; "and yet there is too much blood on the hands of War-Eagle; the Great Spirit is angry with him for it."

The Osage made no reply. The Missionary interchanged a whispered word with Prairie-bird, and the chief continued, addressing chiefly the Delawares in their own language. "My brothers, we often pray to the Great Spirit to forgive what we have done that is wrong. The Black Father and Olitipa have told War-Eagle the answer that He gives; it is written in the great book, in which there are no lies, 'The Great Spirit will forgive us, if we forgive our brother; if we refuse to forgive our brother, the Great Spirit will refuse to forgive us.' War-Eagle has done many things wrong; he hopes the Great Spirit will forgive him. Shall he now kill the Washashe?" He then turned to the prisoners, and said, "Let their bands be cut, and let them return to their own people to tell *them that the Lenapé* hurt not women nor chil*dren, nor men whose* hands are tied. Olitipa has read from the book, that such is the will of the Great Spirit, whom the white men call by the name of God, and the heart of War-Eagle tells him that it is true."

It is doubtful whether this speech caused greater surprise among his own followers, or among the Osages whom it restored to life and liberty. Both, however, heard it with the absence of outward emotion which characterizes the red-skin race in North America; so that Ethelston, who did not understand a word of the Delaware tongue, was perfectly unconscious of anything having been said that might materially affect the fortunes of the prisoners; and he was in momentary expectation of seeing them led away to suffer, according to the laws of Indian retribution, the deserved penalty of their cruelty and treachery.

While Pierre was informing him of what had occurred, the Osage spokesman resolved apparently to try the patience of the expiring Chief to the uttermost, and said to him, with a sneer, "War-Eagle is very good to the Washashe; he knows that they have neither food nor arms; there is not one knife among the four. They are among the mountains, a whole moon's journey from their village, surrounded by war-parties of the Upsaroka and Blackfeet, and on their return-path must pass the hunting-grounds of the Shiennes, the Kiowás, the Pânis, and the Mahas. War-Eagle would rather that they were starved, and their bones gnawed by the wolves, than see them die like warriors, and laugh at the Lenapé in their death."

Paul Müller looked anxiously at the Chief, to mark what effect would be produced by this ungrateful and intemperate speech; and his apprehensions were much relieved when he heard War-Eagle reply, in a calm and unmoved tone, "There is no wonder that the Washashe think others are like themselves, false-hearted and double-tongued. Had the Lenapé intended that the Washashe should be killed, they would have spared the Upsaroka and the wolves the task. War-Eagle intends that they should live to be ashamed of their bad deeds. Wingenund will see that they enter safely on the home-path. Now let them go; their words are bitter, and they can neither speak nor believe the truth. War-Eagle has no more time to waste with them."

As he uttered this reproof in a contemptuous, rather than an angry tone, the Chief fell back much exhausted upon his cushion, and the leading Osage was about to make some violent reply, when Pierre, taking him by the arm, hurried him and his companions to the outer edge of the circle, saying to him, as he went, "Peace, fool! Is thy thick head so fond of trusting a Lenapé tomahawk, that thou cast not hold thy tongue, when thy saucy wagging of it might cost thy life? Peace, I say, or, in spite of the Chief's pardon, I will have thee and thy comrades tied down again like fresh caught colts."

Having spoken words to this effect to the reckless and grumbling Osage, Pierre re-entered the circle gathered round the Chief, and found, on his return, that a general silence prevailed. Wingenund was sitting upon the ground, close to his brother, listening with the deepest attention to the injunctions and counsel which the latter was delivering, in a voice that became

every moment more feeble and indistinct. None present could overhear what passed; but, at the conclusion, the two brothers sat for a few seconds in silence, each pressing his clenched hand upon the heart of the other, after which Wingenund retired a few paces back, while the Chief, collecting his remaining strength, said aloud to his devoted followers, "War-Eagle is going to the land where his fathers dwell; he is sorry to leave his brothers, but it is the will of the Great Spirit, who is the Master of Life;* and when He speaks, the Lenapé are silent, and obey. When War-Eagle is gone, it is his wish that Wingenund should be chief of the band; the blood of Tamenund warms his heart, and though he has not seen many summers, his eyes have not been shut, nor have his ears been closed against the counsel of wise men. My brothers, you have the care of a great treasure, the care of Olitipa, the beloved daughter of Tamenund, the sister who has cleared away the cloud that hid the sun from War-Eagle, and the thorns that beset his path in the dark valley. My brothers, let not one of you leave her until she is safe at the white man's boundary; and if you love War-Eagle, you will also love and obey Wingenund, and Netis his adopted brother."

A deep suppressed murmur was the only reply made by the gloomy warriors around; but War-Eagle knew its import, and read its confirmation on the determined countenances of those who had so often followed him to strife and victory.

The mortal agony was at hand, and the Chief, feeling its approach, looked suddenly round as if he missed some one who should be there; his utterance was scarcely articulate, but Prairie-bird caught the intended sound of Lita's name, and flying into the tent, speedily returned, bringing with her the weeping girl. Again he contrived to make Prairie-bird understand his wish, that an armlet of beads that he wore should be taken off and hung round Lita's neck; the Chief smiled and said, "Lita has been faithful to Olitipa and very good to War-Eagle; the Great Spirit will reward her."

The destroyer was now rapidly tightening his fell coils round the vital organs, but the Chief still retained sufficient strength to press the hand of each of his sorrowing friends in succession against that generous heart which must so soon cease to beat. Wingenund was the last, and as he stooped over his brother, whispered to him a word that reached the ear of Prairie-bird, and while it richly rewarded her pious and affectionate toil, lighted up at the same time the countenance of the dying man with a smile of triumph that bid defiance to the pangs of the grisly King of Terrors. From the time that he received his fatal wounds, not a groan nor murmur of complaint had escaped him, and when he resigned his parting breath, it was with the peaceful tranquillity of childhood falling asleep.

"My children," said the Missionary, solemnly, "War-Eagle, the son of Tamenund, is no more! In life none walked more uprightly than he, according to the light that was given to him! He gave up his life to save that of another, and after enduring grievous pains with the heroism of an Indian warrior, he died with a full hope and trust in the redeeming mercy of his God. Peace be with his soul; and may we all rejoin him hereafter in the land where separation and sorrow will be unknown!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

War-Eagle's Funeral.—The Party commence their homeward Journey.—Besha exerts his diplomatic Talents for the last Time, and receives several Rewards, with some of which he would willingly have dispensed.

It may well be imagined what a gloom was cast over the whole party by the death of the Delaware leader; not only among those who like Reginald, Wingenund, and Prairie-bird, mourned for him as for a departed brother, but even among the rough hunters and woodsmen, to whom he had endeared himself no less by his dauntless courage than by a thousand acts of kindness and generosity. As for his own trusty Lenapé warriors, their spirit seemed entirely broken; too proud to weep or lament, they walked to and fro by the spot where his remains still rested, casting upon the dark cloth by which they were covered desponding and melancholy looks; and when Baptiste, whom they esteemed as the long-tried friend of their late Chief, tried to offer a few words of consolation, hinting also at the virtues and qualities of the surviving brother, they shook their heads and returned to cherish their grief, like the wife of Phinehas, who, when she heard that her husband and her father-in-law were dead, and the Ark captured, regarded not the consolation of her new-born child, but called it Ichabod, saying "The glory is departed from Israel."

"Ethelston," said Reginald to his friend, "methinks the sooner we strike our camp and move from this sad spot the better; it is necessary, from the progress that mortification has made in the frame of our lamented friend, that he should be buried immediately. Let us speak to Wingenund, and see whether he wishes it performed according to our customs or according to those of his own people; for in this we ought not to dictate to him."

Having joined the youth, whom they found standing in an attitude of dejection at no great distance, Reginald, after a few words of kindly sympathy, proposed to him the subject under discussion. To the surprise of both, they found him quite prepared for it. "Yes," he said, "War-Eagle said to Wingenund what he wished, and it shall be done this day. First let us obey his commands about the Washashe; let them be called before the tent, and let the hunters and the Lenapé be summoned too."

This was soon done, and the party being assembled, the Osages were once more brought forward, their limbs having been freed from the

* In the greater number of the Indian languages known on the North American continent, the Supreme Being is designated by a name bearing one of the three following significations:

1. "Great, or Good Spirit;" such is the "Manitou," "Manitto," "Kitche-Manitou," &c., of the Delawares, Chippeways, Sikis, Pottawatomis, and most of the Algonkin tribes.

2. "The Wonderful, or Wonderful Spirit," by which name He is designated among most of the tribes resident on the banks of the Missouri: *e. g.* "Wahcondah" by the Otoes and Omahaws, "Wahcatunca" by the Dahcotahs, "Ma-na-kôpe" by the Minnetarees, &c.

3. "Master of Life," which is the signification of the name by which the Almighty is recognised among the Pawnees, and many other numerous and powerful tribes. The subject is too comprehensive to be more than briefly alluded to in this place.

thongs by which they had been bound; and the general stock of meat, fresh as well as dried, was also, by desire of Wingenund, placed before the tent. These preliminaries being completed, the young chief addressed them as follows: "Washashe, it is known to you that War-Eagle, forgiving your bad deeds, gave you your lives—the Lenapé respect the wishes of their great Chief, and will not send you away with empty hands." He then desired that a fair proportion of meat, a rifle, with a reasonable supply of ammunition, a knife, and a small package of Indian presents should be given to each of the Osages. These orders having been punctually, though reluctantly, obeyed by one of the Delaware warriors, Wingenund continued, "If the Washashe fear to enter upon the long home-path with so few men, they may camp under the shelter of the Lenapé fires—they cannot be called brothers, but no harm shall be done to them."

"The Washashe," replied the powerful Indian who has before been mentioned as the spokesman of the Osages, and who now grasped his restored rifle with an air of fierce exultation, "the Washashe have no fear—they will go upon the path alone—they will not dwell a night by the fires of the Lenapé camp. Wingenund is a young chief, and the Lenapé need not be ashamed when they speak his name; his words and his years are few, but his deeds will be told where the council of warriors meet. His hand is open, but it is red with the blood of their great chief; the Washashe thank him, but they cannot call the Lenapé brothers. The Washashe have no more to say; before the night falls, their feet will be far on the homeward path."

So saying, the grim warrior stalked away with his three companions, the assembled party looking after them in silence, until their forms were lost behind a rock that projected into the valley.

"Proud and thankless scoundrels," muttered Baptiste, half aloud, to the hunter who stood nearest to him. "Had my opinion been taken, they should have been flogged with cow-hides out of the camp, and they might have found their way as they could to their cut-throat friends the Dahcotahs! 'Twas always so with War-Eagle, and will be the same with Wingenund! When the skrimmage was over, and his blood was cool, there was no more cruelty in his natur' than there is in that of a Philadelphy Quaker."

Wingenund having spoken for a few minutes with the Missionary, a party of half a dozen men were desired by the latter to dig a grave for the deceased Chief under a scathed and picturesque pine that stood alone on a small natural mound near the river. It was a spot that seemed to have been framed by the hand of the Creator for a sepulchre, rising as it did in the centre of a wild and unfrequented vale, surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, beyond which rose in the distance the snow-clad summits of the gigantic mountain-range—the fittest natural emblem of Eternity; while, round the base of the mound, flowed the bubbling stream, a memento, no less apt, of the changeful and fleeting nature of all the things belonging to this earthly scene.

The descending sun was just beginning to gild the peaks of the Western Andes when the party assembled to pay the last tribute of affectionate regard to the mortal remains of their late leader. Prairie-bird and her faithful Lita attended, both having their faces veiled by a shawl, and the former supported by her newly-restored brother; nor was there one of the party absent from the mournful ceremony, which was commenced (as soon as the body, still enveloped and bound in dark cloth, was placed near the grave) by a brief address from Wingenund, in which he said,

"My brothers, know that War-Eagle was a great chief; that the blood of many warriors ran in his veins. The enemies of the Lenapé were his enemies, and their friends his friends. When their warriors went forth to battle, he was not the last; and when they returned, his war-club could tell a tale." A deep murmur of assent was uttered by the Delawares, and Wingenund continued: "War-Eagle loved the Lenapé from his childhood; and in his last moments he prayed to the Great Spirit for their happiness. He also told Wingenund that Olitipa and the Black Father had read to him many wonderful things from the Great Spirit's Book; that he had thought much of them, and found them very good and very true. They had made his heart so glad, that he wished Wingenund and his Lenapé brothers to hear them, that they might learn how to please the Great Spirit, and to obey his will. Wingenund promised War-Eagle that, when the Black Father told them the commands of the Great Spirit written in the book, the ears of the Lenapé should be open to listen to the words of his wisdom, and to let his counsel guide their feet. My brothers, such were the wishes of War-Eagle, great chief of the Unámi band of the Ancient People. Wingenund has told them truly, and he intends to obey them himself; his years are yet too few that he should advise others; let each of my brothers think of these things wisely, and act as the Great Spirit shall incline his heart."

A long and profound silence followed this speech; after which Paul Müller, approaching the mound, desired that the body might be lowered into the grave. When this was done, he addressed first the Delawares, setting forth the virtues of the deceased chieftain, and laying the greatest stress upon those which were of a more mild and peaceful character. He touched also most feelingly upon the occasion on which he had received the injuries from which he died, assuring the Delawares that no length of time, nor changes of life, would ever efface from the memory of Prairie-bird, or those to whom she was so dear, the devoted heroism of her deliverer. "But, my beloved brothers," said he, in conclusion, "great as was the gift that he gave to her, even his life for hers, he received from her a gift much greater; for it is my humble hope and belief that, through her entreaty and prayer, his eyes were open to see things that he had never seen before; and, having once seen their riches and their beauty, he desired that you, my brothers, should see them too. He learned what, I fear, you cannot yet understand—that it is the will of the Great Spirit that we should observe and study his works, and copy them. Is it true, my friends? Is there sense in my words?"

He paused for a reply. The elder Delawares looked at each other, and then, as if by mutual consent, nodded their assent.

The Missionary continued: "Well, then, the Great Spirit is merciful and just, kind and forgiving, loving peace and hating [illegible]. How

to we try to please him? By hating peace, and being swift to shed blood; by revenging where we ought to forgive, and dealing harshly by those on whom we ought to have mercy. The Osages who are just gone are wicked men; they have been guilty of treachery and cruelty, and you are disappointed that you were not permitted to kill them, and that Wingenund sent them away unhurt. They have been wicked, far more wicked, towards the Great Spirit; they have disobeyed His commands, despised His laws, destroyed the creatures of His hand, and have insulted Him and braved His anger for weeks, and months, and years! How has he treated them? He has given them water from His clouds, and has brought the herds of bison to their hunting-ground, and has given the sun to warm them by day, and the moon and stars to light their path by night! And if even now one of them—nay, the very worst among them, were to have his heart softened, and to turn to the Great Spirit, and say, 'My Father in heaven, I am sorry for all the wrong that I have done, O forgive and guide me, for I wish to do so no more!' it is written in that book by the hand of the Great Spirit himself, that He would forgive that sorrowful man, and bless him, and turn the bitterness of his heart into gladness and joy sweeter than honey! These things, my dear brothers, are not learned in a day; but, I thank God that by His blessing, and the affectionate and patient labours of Olitipa, the eyes of War-Eagle were opened to see them; and he desired that those whom he most loved should see and feel them like himself. We will now take our last farewell of him on earth, after the manner of those who love, fear, and obey the word of the Father of us all."

Having thus spoken, the worthy Missionary knelt by the side of the newly-filled grave, and concluded the solemnities of the occasion by an affecting prayer in the English tongue; Reginald, Ethelston, and all the hunters and woodsmen, kneeling uncovered, and finally joining in that perfect model of supplication taught by the Redeemer himself to those who, in whatever age or clime, are called by His name.

Having paid these last honours to their departed friend, the leaders of the party withdrew to make the proposed arrangements for striking the camp on the following morning, and for settling the line and order of march.

The Delawares lingered for some time, as if unwilling to leave the remains of their beloved Chief, and at length slowly retired, one by one, until there remained only our old friend Baptiste and a veteran Delaware, who, from his feats of hardihood, and the stern fierceness of his nature, was generally known by the name of Stony-heart.

"Grande-Hâche," said the latter, addressing his companion, "it may be all very good what the Black Father says, but Stony-heart does not understand it. When War-Eagle said that the Lenapé should not kill those who had taken the scalps of their warriors or of their women, the Mad Spirit must have got into his brain! Stony-heart has seen many winters, and has heard the talk of the wise men in council, but he never heard such words as these!"

It must be confessed that Baptiste was not in his heart a very strong advocate for the doctrine of forgiveness; we have already seen in a former chapter, that he was rather disposed to favour the Indian law of retaliation: he answered,

"Stony-heart speaks true; yet he must remember that War-Eagle only desired that his Lenapé brothers should hear what the Black Father had to say on this matter; they can then decide whether his words are idle or not. It will be easier for him to persuade the young than men who like us have known for forty winters that the custom of the woods, and of the prairie, is life for life, and scalp for scalp!"

"It will," rejoined the other; "and Grande-Hâche will see that no good will follow from having spared the lives of those four Washashe dogs!"

With this prophetic observation, Stony-heart rejoined his comrades, and Baptiste joined the small group assembled before the door of the tent.

On the following morning the party began their homeward march, Wingenund leading the way, followed by his Delawares, and accompanied by Besha and the Crow guide, who had been sent for by a runner before daybreak. The packed mules and horses were placed in the centre under the special charge of Monsieur Perrot, whose fund of good-humour and resource had never failed him, and who now performed the office of a muleteer with the same readiness with which he fulfilled the respective duties of valet to Reginald, and cook, messman, and buffoon to the whole party. The rear was brought up by Ethelston and Reginald, the latter still keeping his post at the bridle of Nekimi, the line of march being closed by Baptiste and some of the most experienced hunters, while Pierre was sent forward to aid Wingenund, he being the most skilful and practised in the peculiar difficulties of the dangerous region which they were now about to traverse.

For several days all went on as well as could be expected. The heat was intense, and water was sometimes scarce; several of the mules and pack-horses dropped down from exhaustion, and were left behind; the stock of provisions was somewhat short, but the party twice fell in with a small herd of buffalo, from which they procured a tolerable supply; and, at camping time, they all assembled round the fire in front of Prairie-bird's tent, and, after their frugal evening meal, wore away the time with conversation suited to the different groups into which the party divided itself, some talking over former campaigns, others cracking their jokes and enjoying the laugh which invariably followed Perrot's determined attempts to explain himself in the Delaware tongue, while Reginald, Ethelston, and Prairie-bird lived over again the days of their childhood, or recounted to each other some of the most interesting incidents of the intervening years.

All remarked the changed aspect and increased gravity of Wingenund; his manner was indeed gentle and quiet as before, but the death of his brother, and the responsibility now entrusted to him, added to other serious matters which occupied his mind, seemed in him to have annihilated the interval between early youth and ripened manhood. First to rise before daybreak, and last to lie down at night, he seemed unconscious of fatigue, and resolved that on this occasion at least, the Delawares should not from his neglect be reminded of the loss that they had so lately sustained. At night he visited the sentries and saw that every one was at his allotted post, and on the march, whenever the nature of the ground rendered precaution necessary, scouts were sent

forward to examine it, and to guard against ambush or surprise. Every evening he joined the little party before the tent, and never left it without wishing his sister (as he still called Prairie-bird) a night of rest, and asking a blessing from the lips of the Black Father.

The Crows behaved upon this occasion better than had been expected of them, camping always at a certain distance from the allied party, and observing faithfully the other conditions of the treaty. The Guide whom they had supplied led the way towards the Great Prairie, by a valley considerably to the northward of that by which they had entered the mountain region, and Pierre soon perceived that its eastern termination was at spot that was easily recognised, by all experienced trappers, as the "Devil's Kettle," owing to the steam that ascended from a hot-spring, celebrated for its medicinal qualities among the neighbouring tribes.

Here the fresh horses promised by the Crows were supplied, and an equal number of those exhausted and incapable of further travel were left behind. Nekimi alone of the whole quadruped band, seemed insensible alike to the scantiness of pasture, and the heat and fatigue of the journey. The fair burthen that he bore was as that of a feather compared to the powerful frame of his former rider when armed and equipped, and the noble animal seemed desirous of expressing his gratitude for the change by rubbing his forehead against Reginald as he walked before him, or nibbling out of his hand a few young shoots of alder or willow that he was now and then fortunate enough to cut by the half-dried bed of some mountain stream.

In this way they travelled forward without accident or adventure, until they reached the banks of a river of considerable size, which Pierre conjectured to be the head-water of the southern-fork of the Neosho, or the Platte, and here they were to complete the terms of the treaty, and bid adieu to their Upsaroka friends, the opposite bank of the river not being considered within the limits of their hunting ground.

The ceremonials observed upon this occasion were much the same as the preceding, with the exception that Bending-willow paid a visit to Prairie-bird, received from her several presents, drank a cup of the wonderful black liquor, of which her husband had told her, namely, coffee sweetened with sugar, and told her fair hostess that his affections had not as yet strayed to any other of his spouses—a fact the truth of which was attested by her displaying, with the most ostentatious coquetry, the mirror-backed brush, of which he was more proud than of anything that he possessed.

Besha made himself wonderfully busy during the payment of the presents due to the Crows; and in one or two instances when the latter claimed more than was recorded in Reginald's memorandum, he stoutly maintained that the white men were right, and recommended the Crows to withdraw their pretensions; in so doing he did not neglect to whisper every now and then to Baptiste or Pierre, a hint that he intended to be paid for his disinterested support.

All this was not lost upon White-Bull, who, although he could not understand a word of what passed, felt, nevertheless, convinced that the interpreter was playing some under-game. He *said nothing, however,* and the distribution was *satisfactorily completed,* Wingenund and Reginald *adding gratuitously* several presents for the chiefs beyond those promised in the treaty. Besha, to the surprise of many of the Crows who knew his avaricious disposition, went away, apparently well satisfied, with nothing more than a blanket and a knife; but they did not know that he had privately whispered to Baptiste that he would come by night to fetch away his stipulated share of the presents (and that too a lion's share), as the Crows might be jealous if they saw them, and might take them from him.

The two parties having taken their final leave of each other, the task of guide devolved upon Pierre, who resolved not to cross the Platte that evening, it being now rather late, but to encamp where they were, while the Crows returned some dozen miles upon their trail before they encamped for the night. They had seen enough of the effective force and discipline of the allied band to deter them from attacking it, and prudently resolved to return to their own country with the goods which they had already acquired without loss or risk; although it becomes us, as veracious historians, to state (however little credit the statement may reflect upon White-Bull) that it had been, from the first, his intention to attack and plunder the party, had their carelessness or neglect afforded him an opportunity of doing so with impunity.

Besha having ascertained the spot selected for the Crow encampment, lingered behind their line of march, accompanied by the lad before-mentioned as being his constant attendant, whom he left concealed, with two of his horses, behind a small hillock beside the trail, desiring him there to await his return. In order to avoid suspicion he continued in the company of White-Bull until it was dusk, and did not leave the camp until an hour later, when he threw a large dark-coloured blanket over his shoulders, and slipping away unperceived, rejoined the lad left in charge of the horses.

Mounting one himself, he desired his companion to follow on the other, and trotted briskly forward, under the partial light of a young moon, over the ground which he had carefully noted during the day, until he reached a spot where the trail approached within a hundred yards of the banks of the Platte, and where a few alder bushes offered convenient shelter for the horses. Here the lad was again desired to await his master's return; and as the dew began to fall heavy, he was not sorry that the latter left with him the large dark-coloured blanket above-mentioned.

Besha now pursued his way on foot; and on reaching the outposts of the allied band found, as had been preconcerted, two of the Delawares bearing several large packages, containing the presents and goods that he had earned in his mixed capacity of diplomatic agent and interpreter. The packages being inconvenient for the horse-dealer to carry alone, both on account of their weight and number, he prevailed upon one of the Delawares to assist him in carrying them to the spot where he had left the horses. It was only by offering the Indian, who was no other than Stony-heart, a little bag full of excellent kinne-kinnik for his pipe, that he prevailed upon him to undertake this task. But the materials for smoking had become scarce, and it was an indulgence from which, when within reach, Stony-heart could not refrain; he accordingly sent back his companion, and, telling him that he would return in the course of an hour or two, set forth with the horse-dealer on the trail.

We must now see how it fared with the lad

left in charge of the horses, who, being tired with the day's march, fastened the end of their long halters to his arm, and wrapping himself in the blanket, laid down upon the grass, and soon fell into a comfortable doze. One of the horses, probably disliking this unusual separation from those with which it was accustomed at this hour to feed, neighed several times aloud, for which disturbance of his slumber it received a pull of the halter, and a muttered execration from the youth, when he again fell into a state of unconsciousness.

Now it so happened that the neighing of the horse reached other ears at no great distance, being those of no less a person than the Osage, who, with his three companions, was on his homeward way, and had on the preceding day stolen an old canoe that they found on the bank of the river; and after patching up a few rents and holes, had embarked in it to save themselves a portion of their long foot journey. They had seen from a distance the moving bands of the white men and of the Crows, and had hauled their canoe under some alder bushes on the bank, in order to consult and determine whether they should drop further down the river during the night, or leaving it, strike a more southerly course.

While holding this consultation, the neighing of Besha's horse caught the quick ear of their leader; he listened—and hearing it repeated, crept towards the spot, followed by his three companions. As soon as the uncertain light of the moon enabled him to distinguish the two pack-horses fastened to the sleeping lad, he again crept noiselessly forward, and springing upon him, enveloped him in his own blanket, stuffing the corner of it into his mouth, so that he could neither struggle nor make any noise.

Leaving one of his men in charge of the horses, he carried the youth swiftly to the water's edge, where he securely pinioned and gagged him, not, however, before he had recognised by the moonlight the countenance of Besha's attendant. The Osage's plan was soon formed; for he rightly conjectured that the horse-dealer was gone upon some errand, from which he would not return empty handed; and he also owed the horse-dealer a grudge for having, as he supposed, favoured Wingenund in that eventful scene which terminated Mahéga's life.

Stripping the youth of his dark blanket and of the broad-brimmed hat of Mexican grass that he wore, the Osage put them on himself; and taking his seat by the same bush, he held the halters of the horses, and partially concealing his face in one of the folds of the blanket, awaited in this disguise the return of the horse-dealer, while his three companions concealed themselves behind the adjacent bushes.

They had not been very long ensconced before Besha appeared, followed by the doughty Stony-heart, who muttered to himself as he came that he would not carry such a load so far again for all the kinne-kinnik in the camp. The horse-dealer as he drew near gave the usual signal-whistle for his attendant; and finding that it was unanswered, looked towards the spot, where he descried the slumbering figure in the slouched hat and dark blanket; while one of his pack-horses, lately cast loose, seemed to be deliberately walking off to seek better pasture. Hastily throwing his own package to the ground, he went to secure the stray animal, calling at the same time to Stony-heart,

"Kick that sleepy dog till he wakens, that he may come and assist me with these packs."

The Delaware, who was not a man of many words, proceeded forthwith to execute this order, and, without putting down his heavy load, bestowed a sound kick upon the reclining figure, which, to his infinite surprise, started instantly to its feet in the shape of a powerful man, who threw him, encumbered as he was, upon the ground, and successfully resisted all his violent efforts to extricate himself. While one of the Osages came to assist in securing the fallen Delaware, the other two seized the unlucky horse-dealer, just as he was mounting in the hope of saving himself by flight.

So successfully had the Osages planned and executed this manœuvre, that in less than five minutes their last two prisoners were laid bound and pinioned together with the first in the canoe, where the captured bales and presents were also stowed away, and while one of the Osages took the horses to a ford not far distant, which had been recently crossed by a large herd of bison, the remaining three, with their prisoners, paddled across the river, and then noiselessly along the opposite bank, until they had reached a deep and winding creek, which fell into the main river, and which they had noticed by daylight as affording convenient fuel and shelter. Having pursued their way up the creek until they considered themselves safe from pursuit, and their fire from the observation of either encampment, they gathered and lighted a goodly pile of dry alder-wood, and proceeded deliberately to unpack and examine the bales and packages, throwing their three pinioned captives roughly on one side, as being so much live lumber unworthy of their notice.

The plunder that they found themselves thus suddenly possessed of exceeded their utmost expectations; and as it contained, among other things, a package of excellent dried meat and the kinne-kinnik, from which poor Stony-heart had expected so much gratification, they ate copiously of the former, and smoked copiously of the latter, until they were in the highest possible state of Osage enjoyment.

It was not long before they were joined by their comrade with the horses, who received, as soon as he had fastened the latter, his due share both of the provisions and the plunder; after which they ungagged the prisoners, at the same time giving them to understand that if they made the least noise they would be put to death immediately. Indeed, whether they were noisy or quiet, it seemed by no means improbable that such might be their fate, for two of the Osages strongly urged the necessity for so doing, under the plea of self-preservation. The leader seemed, however, to be of a different opinion, and he had already established a kind of prescriptive right of command over his comrades.

Having thrown some dry sticks upon the fire to make it blaze, he drew Stony-heart towards the light, and as it fell upon his countenance enabled him to recognise in his prisoner one of the chief warriors of the Delaware band.

"Is Stony-heart become a mule," said he with a grin, "that he carries bales and blankets upon his back?"

To this taunt Stony-heart did not deign to reply, and a brief conversation ensued among the Osages; after which their leader came again to him, and having searched his dress, satisfied himself that the Delaware had no other arms

with him than a knife and a small pistol concealed in his belt. The former he left untouched, but the latter he dipped in the creek until it was thoroughly soaked, and then returned it to the owner, whom, having now released from his bands, he thus addressed:

"Stony-heart may return to his people; he is free; and he may tell Wingenund that the Washashe know how to repay a good deed, as well as to revenge a bad one. Stony-heart may go!"

The Delaware waited no second bidding, but returned with all haste towards his camp, being obliged to swim the river, and muttering to himself, after he had crossed it, "I told Baptiste that no good could ever come of sparing the lives of those Washashe dogs!" such being the only gratitude that he either felt or expressed for the clemency that he had just experienced at their hands!

Soon after his departure, the Osages turned their attention to Besha, sternly questioning him as to the part he had taken in their late chief's dispute with Wingenund; and in spite of all his protestations of impartiality and innocence, they stripped him of every article of clothing save his moccasins, and gave him a most severe flogging with a laryette of bull's-hide, after which they decamped, leaving him still pinioned, and writhing with pain, while they carried with them his attendant, whom they compelled to load and arrange the packs upon the horses, and to lead the latter for the first dozen miles of their route; after which they permitted him to return to release his master, who crawled back with difficulty, before daylight, to the Crow camp, having reaped the reward of his intrigues, cunning, and avarice, in the loss of all his presents, two of his best horses, and a flogging, from the effects of which he suffered for a long time.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Scene is shifted to the Banks of the Muskingum, and Prairie-bird returns to the Home of her Childhood.

About two months after the events related in the preceding chapters, there was an unusual stir and bustle in the town of Marietta, and half a score of its principal inhabitants were assembled in front of David Muir's house, to witness the landing of the crew and passengers belonging to a large boat that had just arrived at the wooden pier which projected into the river.

Foremost of a busy group at the water's edge was the sturdy form of Gregson the mate, whose orders respecting the bringing-to, and making fast, were implicitly obeyed; and when at length she was securely moored alongside the pier, numerous and hearty were the greetings between those who stepped ashore from her, and the friends from whom they had been so long severed.

"Bearskin, how are you? my old fresh-water porpoise!" said the mate, squeezing the hard hand of the Mississippi boatman. "How fares it, messmate?"

"All right now, my hearty; but we've had some foul weather since I saw you last."

"Ay, I see!" said the mate, observing the scars upon his old companion's face and forehead; "you've been snagged, and damaged your figure-head a bit: never mind that; we'll have *all that yarn out by-and-by* over a bottle of *David's best. See, here he comes to welcome you himself!*"

Leaving David Muir and Bearskin to their mutual greetings, the mate returned to the waterside and lent his powerful assistance to the landing of the cargo of the heavily-laden boat; and certainly, a more strange or heterogeneous mixture of animate and inanimate stock never came out of any vessel since the disembarkation from the ark. Skins, furs, bows, rifles, moccasins, and Indian curiosities of every description, were piled near the bows, while in the after-part were stowed provisions of all kinds, and kegs, which were by no means so full as they were when the boat left St. Louis.

The appearance, language, and costume of the crew would baffle any attempt at description, inasmuch as each sunburnt, unshaved individual composing it, had equipped and attired himself according to his own fancy, and according to the contents of his remaining wardrobe after a long sojourn in the western wilderness and when it is remembered that these hardy fellows were from all the varied clans and nations found between the sources and the mouth of the "Father of Waters," it is not surprising that their mingled jargon should have struck upon the ear like the dialects of Babel in the day of its confusion. There were half-breed Creeks and Cherokees; Canadians, some with no little admixture of Chippeway blood; others, proud of their pure French descent: there were also some of the rough boatmen, who had already migrated to the banks of the Great River, where it washes the western boundaries of what are now the States of Kentucky and Illinois; and a raw-boned, sinewy fellow, who acted as a sort of second mate, was giving instructions in broad Scotch, to a dark-eyed and diminutive individual, who replied to him in bad Spanish. Above the din of all these multifarious tongues, was heard the shrill and incessant voice of Monsieur Perrot, who was labouring with indefatigable zeal to collect his master's baggage, and to put it safely ashore.

This he was at length enabled to effect with the aid of David Muir and the mate; after which the articles destined for Mooshanne were piled in readiness for the wagon which was to convey them, and the remainder found their way by degrees to their respective destinations.

When at last the good-humoured valet found himself comfortably seated in the merchant's parlour with the worthy man himself, Dame Christie, Jessie, and the mate, for his audience, and a bottle of madeira, with some fried ham and fresh eggs upon the table, he gave a sigh, the importance of which was lost upon none of those present, and he looked from one to the other with the conscious superiority of a man who knows how much he has to tell.

It is not our province to follow him through the "hair-breadth 'scapes," the "moving accidents by flood and field," with which he set his astonished hearers "all agape;" the only portion of his narrative which it concerns us to know, is that which referred to the movements of Reginald Brandon and the remainder of his party, who might, according to Monsieur Perrot's account, be almost daily expected at Mooshanne, as they had left St. Louis and crossed its ferry with tent, baggage, and a large cavalcade, on the day of his embarkation in the great "Bateau."

It was so long since Monsieur Perrot had tasted any liquid with a flavour like that of the merchant's madeira, that he sipped and talked,

talked and sipped, without noting the lapse of time, and the evening was already far advanced before he thought of rising to take his departure for Mooshanne; even then, David Muir pressed him so strongly to remain with him over-night, and continue his journey on the following morning, that Monsieur Perrot found himself quite unable to resist accepting the invitation; especially as he thought that another day or two might probably elapse before the return of Reginald; and, moreover, the bright eyes of Jessie Muir looked a thousand times brighter from the contrast that her beauty afforded to the swart dusky complexions by which he had so lately been surrounded.

Leaving the merry Frenchman and his still wondering auditors in David's parlour, we will proceed without delay to Mooshanne, where it happened that, about four o'clock on the same afternoon, a single horseman sprang from the animal that, to judge from its appearance, had carried him far and fast, and, having rung the door-bell, waited not for any one to answer it, but walked straight into the vestibule.

The bell was still ringing when the door of the drawing-room was slightly opened that the blue eyes of Lucy might herself reconnoitre the new comer; the next moment saw her in her brother's arms.

"Dear, dear Reginald! 'tis he, 'tis he, indeed!" and she drew him into the room that her father might share her rapturous joy.

While the Colonel pressed his son to his heart in a fond paternal embrace, Lucy ran up stairs to prepare the more delicate nerves of her invalid mother for the shock of happiness that awaited her.

Scarcely were these first affectionate greetings exchanged, ere Lucy inquired with expectant eagerness, "When will they arrive?—how far off are they, Reginald?"

"They cannot now be long; I think within a couple of hours they must be here. If I mistake not, Lucy, there is one of the party who begrudged me not a little my office of *avant-courier*."

Lucy blushed "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue," as she felt how her heart leaped within her to meet the one to whom her brother referred; and she hastened away to conceal her mingled confusion and happiness, in the thousand little details of preparation for her expected guests.

It may be as well here to mention, that immediately on reaching St. Louis, Reginald had dispatched a messenger on horseback to his father with a letter, containing the outline of the events connected with his western expedition, and informing him of the rescue of Prairie-bird, and of the attachment that existed between her and himself. He spoke not of her parentage, further than to say that she had been carried off in childhood from her own family, who were of a lineage and descent altogether unexceptionable; and he entreated and conjured his father not to entertain, nor pronounce any objection to his proposed alliance, until he had an opportunity of seeing, hearing, and judging for himself.

Reginald had also insisted upon Ethelston's abstaining from this topic in any letter that he might wish to send from St. Louis, and the Colonel had thought it advisable to say nothing to Lucy of her brother's attachment, while there remained a doubt of its being such as he could approve or sanction; so that he had only informed her that the party would bring back with them Prairie-bird, whom the young Delaware had mentioned so often as his sister, but who was, in fact, the daughter of English parents, of the highest respectability; and that she would be accompanied by Paul Müller, a missionary, whose reputation for piety and learning was extensively spread, and who had been, since her residence with the Indians, her instructor and adopted father.

Lucy's curiosity to see Prairie-bird had been, since the arrival of her brother's letter, extraordinarily excited. Sometimes she fancied her a half-wild, half-civilized being clad in a dress of skins, and speaking broken English. Then again she was puzzled at the remembrance of the affectionate reverence, almost amounting to worship, with which Wingenund had spoken of her, and again her calculation was at fault. Under these doubts and perplexities, she consulted Aunt Mary, and with her aid and concurrence had prepared for her expected guest a room upon the ground floor, that looked upon her own flower-garden. Its furniture was simple, but exceedingly pretty, being a kind of representation of a tent, of an octagon shape, and hung with a delicate-coloured pink chintz.

The view from the windows was lovely; for although the flowery parterres had lost their brightest summer hues, a few roses still lingered among them, contrasting with the thousand autumnal colours that decked the shady mass of distant forests, between which and the flower-garden was seen here and there, through a leafy vista, the winding course of the Muskingum. Lucy had decked the interior of the room with all those nameless comforts and luxuries that betoken woman's affectionate care; several shelves were covered with well-selected books, and two china baskets upon the table were filled with such flowers as the indefatigable Aunt Mary had placed there, unconscious for whom she gathered them.

As soon as Reginald had enjoyed a short interview with his mother, whose health, though still delicate, had somewhat improved since he had last seen her, Lucy entered, and taking him by the arm, said, "Come, Reginald, you must inspect my preparations. See, this is your own room, which you will find rather more gay than when you left it, as Aunt Mary would have it new-papered. That beyond is destined, as before, for Ed—for Ethelston."

"Has Aunt Mary thought it requisite to new-paper that, too, or did it occur to Miss Lucy without her aunt's suggestion?"

Lucy punished him with a slight pinch on the arm; and then, leading him down the stairs to the tent apartment, said to him, "Now, sir, I will show you what I have prepared for your Indian lady; this is Prairie-bird's room."

The tell-tale blood rushed into Reginald's bronzed and sunburned cheek, as he stood within the room destined to contain his heart's treasure; thoughts far too sweet, and deep, and swift for words, mingled the past and the future in a delicious dream, as bending over his sister he kissed her fair forehead, and pressed her in silence to his heart.

With the intuitive quickness of sympathy, Lucy read in that expressive silence the secret of her brother's breast; and looking up to him, half reproachfully, she said, "Reginald, could not you have trusted your Lucy so far, as to tell her that Prairie-bird would have a dearer title to her affections than that of being Wingenund's

sister, or the child of the Missionary's adoption?"

"Dear Lucy!" replied her brother, with an impressive earnestness, that reassured while it awed her, "there has been so much of the mysterious and merciful working of Providence in the history of Prairie-bird, that I am sure you will forgive me when I ask you to wait a few hours before all is explained to you. Meanwhile, receive her, for these few hours, as a guest; if at the end of them you do not love her as a sister, my prophetic spirit errs widely of its mark."

Lucy saw well how deeply her brother's feelings were moved, and she prayed inwardly that her expected guest might fulfil his prophecy. It must be owned, however, that there lurked a doubt in her heart whether it could be possible that a girl reared in an Indian camp could be to her a sister, or could be worthy of that brother, whom her fond partiality clothed with attributes beyond those which belong to ordinary mortals. Her affection for Reginald would not permit her to let him perceive these doubts; but fearful of betraying them by her manner, she left him in the room destined for Prairie-bird, while she hastened to aid the indefatigable Aunt Mary in some of the other preparations that were going forward; the Colonel having given orders that the whole party, of whatever rank or station, should be hospitably entertained.

Reginald was no sooner left alone, than casting his eyes around the room, a sudden idea occurred to him of preparing an agreeable surprise for his betrothed on her entrance to her new domicile. He remembered having seen below, in the drawing-room, a Spanish guitar, which he lost no time in securing; and having taken it from the case, he ascertained that it was a very fine instrument, and that the strings were in very tolerable order. He now laid it upon the sofa-table in her room, placing beside it a slip of paper which he took from his pocket, and which seemed, from its soiled and crumpled condition, to have suffered not a little from the various wettings to which, during the past months of travel, it had been exposed. Still he lingered in the room, noting with satisfaction the various trifling luxuries and comforts which his sister had prepared for Prairie-bird, when suddenly he caught the sound of a bugle-note, in which he instantly recognised the signal to be given by Baptiste of the party's approach.

How did his heart beat within him as he flew to welcome them; yet were its throbbing pulsations like the quiet of sleep compared to those of the maiden, who now drew near the home of her infancy. Ethelston had leaped to the ground, and half supported her in the saddle with one hand, while with the other he checked Nekimi, whose impatient neigh betrayed his remembrance of the corn-bin, and the well-known stall.

"Edward—Edward, I cannot go through this!" said the half-fainting girl. "My thoughts are all confused—my brain turns round—see, there is the house! I cannot remember it. O, stay a minute—only one minute, that I may recover myself!"

"Dear Evy!" said her brother, looking up while she leaned affectionately upon his shoulder, "'tis natural that your thoughts should be mingled and confused, but let them not be gloomy *now! The house is so* changed within the last *ten years, that had you* built it yourself you *could not recognise it in* its present state. Already I can distinguish dear Aunt Mary's white cap and apron; and Lucy, longing to embrace a sister; the grey locks of the stately Colonel, and one beside him, who will not be the last to welcome Prairie-bird!"

"I can distinguish nothing, Edward; there is a mist before my eyes: but it is a mist of love and happiness unspeakable!"

"Courage, dear Evy!" said her brother in a cheering tone; "let them not think that Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, and that her heart regrets the change from the prairie to the scenes of her childhood, and the home of her choice!"

"Edward!" said his sister reproachfully, while a tear started in her eye, and the blood mounted to her temples; then shaking back the dark locks from her glowing cheeks, as if she would thereby shake off the temporary weakness by which she had been overcome, she added, "Remount your horse; we have yet some hundred feet to go; if Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, it shall be Nekimi's fault, and not her own!"

So saying, she shook the loosened rein upon the neck of the fiery steed, which bounding forward with a spring that would have unseated a less practised rider, bore her swiftly to the door, where he stopped, obedient to her delicate hand, and champed, and frothed, and snorted, as if proud alike of his burden and of his own matchless symmetry of form.

Never had her radiant beauty so thrilled through Reginald's every nerve as at this moment, when, lightly touching his proffered arm, she sprang to the ground; her cheek glowing with agitation, and her eye moistened by contending emotions, she interchanged with him one silent look of conscious love, and then turned, with gentle grace, to receive the greeting of Colonel Brandon.

We have before said that he had been far from pleased with the contemplated alliance of his son, and had made up his mind to receive Prairie-bird with cold and studied courtesy, nor to treat her otherwise than as an ordinary guest, until he should have satisfied himself respecting her birth and connexions; but, in spite of himself, these resolutions vanished before the irresistible attractions of her manner and bearing, so that instead of only extending his hand as he had proposed, he imprinted a parental kiss upon her forehead, saying,

"Welcome, heartily and truly welcome to Mooshanne!"

She tried to speak, but she looked on the half-remembered features of Reginald's father, and her collected strength began to fail. At this moment she was greeted by Lucy, whom she already knew to be the chosen of her brother's heart.

"Prairie-bird must learn to love her sister!" whispered she, folding her in an affectionate embrace.

"*Learn*, Lucy!" replied Prairie-bird, whose tears could no longer be controlled. "Learn! can a few years have so changed our faces and our hearts, that Lucy and Evy must now learn to love each other?"

Before the astonished girl could reply, Aunt Mary, darting forward with frantic haste, exclaimed, "What voice is that?" Then catching Prairie-bird by the arm, examined with wild intensity every line of her countenance. As she looked, the tears gathered in her own eyes, her frame trembled with agitation, and she fell upon

eck. saying, "'Tis she—'tis my poor r's long-lost child!"

y's heart told her that it was so indeed: l Brandon was overcome with astonish- but he read in the looks of Reginald and on that the lost treasure was restored; memory retraced in the features of Prai- l those of his attached and lamented friend, , was unmanned; and grasping Ethelston's rung it with an emotion beyond the power ds.

news spread like wild-fire throughout use that Captain Ethelston's sister was ed; and Lucy was obliged to run with all o her mother's room to prevent a sudden of joy that might affect her weakly nerves. ssible to describe, or imagine the trans- f the succeeding hour in that happy cir- the caresses showered upon Prairie-bird! word would the pen or tongue employ? ratulations?" As well might one at- o represent Niagara by the water poured pitcher!

will trust that hour to the reader's heart, ill suppose it past, and that Lucy, with arful eyes, and her arm still round her re- d sister's neck, was leading her from the where she had just knelt to receive Mrs. n's maternal kiss, when, in passing a en door, Lucy said, "Evy, that is your 's room; but he is not in it, he is still on rn."

! I must look into Edward's room," ex- d Prairie-bird; and opening the door, she l, followed by Lucy. A rifle, a fowling- and a fishing-rod stood in one corner; em were ranged several pair of pistols, o or three cutlasses, apparently of foreign anship; in the opposite corner, near the w, was a globe, by the side of which stood filled with naval charts; on the other the room was ranged a row of shelves ored with books, and the writing-table in ntre was covered with papers all neatly d docketed, as he had left them at his last are.

rie-bird's eye wandered with a certain de- f interest over all these indications of her r's habits until it rested upon a small por- ung over the chimney-piece. It repre- a man of middle age and stature, and, gh the painting was scarcely above medi- as a work of art, the expression of the nance was strikingly open and benev-

Prairie-bird gazed upon it until she t that the mild orbs upon the inanimate s returned her affectionate gaze. With d hands and beating heart, she stood silent, and then sinking on her knees, t removing her eyes from the object upon they rested, she murmured, in a whisper ly audible, "My Father!"

as indeed the portrait of his lamented that Colonel Brandon had kindly placed elston's room, a circumstance which had d Lucy's memory at the moment of her g it.

ping over her kneeling companion, she her forehead, saying, "Evy, I will leave r a few minutes to commune with the y of the honoured dead; you will find me vestibule below." So saying, she gently the door, and left the room.

ss than a quarter of an hour Prairie-bird d her friend, and though the traces of re- cent emotion were still to be observed, she had recovered her composure, and her countenance wore an expression of grateful happiness.

"Come, Evy," said her young hostess, 'I must now show you your own room; the cage is not half pretty enough for so sweet a bird, but it opens upon the flower-garden, so you can escape when you will, and your dear good Paul Müller is your next neighbour."

An exclamation of delight broke from the lips of Prairie-bird as she entered and looked round the tented apartment, and all its little comforts prepared by Lucy's taste and affection. Fortunately, the day was beautiful, and the casement windows being wide open, her eye caught, beyond the flower-garden, a view of the distant mass of forest, with its thousand varied autumnal tints, reposing in the golden light of the declining sun.

"Oh, it is too, too beautiful!" said Prairie-bird, throwing her arms around Lucy's neck; "I can scarcely believe that this is not all a dream!"

"There have indeed been some fairies here, or some such beings as dwell in dreams, Evy," said Lucy, whose eye fell upon the guitar lying on the table, "for I left this room a short time ago, and this instrument was not here then. Who can have brought it?—can you play upon it, Evy?"

"A little," replied Prairie-bird, colouring.

"And see," continued Lucy, "here is a scrap of paper beside it, so soiled and dirty that I should have put it in the fire had I seen it before; do you know the hand-writing, Evy?"

As Lucy said this she looked archly up in her friend's face, now glowing with a rosy blush.

"Well, you need not answer, for methinks I know it myself; may I unfold the paper, and read its contents? What, no answer yet; then I must take your silence for consent."

Thus saying, she opened the paper, while Prairie-bird, blushing still more deeply, glanced at it with longing but half-averted eyes.

"Verses, I declare!" exclaimed Lucy. "Why, Evy, what magic art have you employed to transform my Nimrod brother, the wild huntsman of the west, the tamer of horses, and the slayer of deer, into a poet?"

She then proceeded to read in a voice of deep feeling, the following stanzas, which, although without any pretensions to poetical merit in themselves, found such acceptance with their present warm-hearted and partial judges, that, at the conclusion of their perusal, the two girls fell upon each other's neck, and remained locked in a silent and affectionate embrace.

On overhearing Prairie-bird's Evening Hymn, "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."*

Yes, hallowed be His Holy Name,
Who formed thee what thou art!
Whose breath inspired the heav'nly flame
Now kindled in thy heart!
Whose love o'erflowing in thy breast
These vocal raptures stirred—
Whose angels hover round thy nest,
Thou orphan Prairie-bird!

Methinks, I see that guardian throng
Sta. mirrored in thy face!
Thy voice hath stol'n their angel-song,
Thy form their angel-grace.
Oh breathe once more that plaintive strain,
Whose every tone and word,
Deep-treasured in my heart and brain
Shall dwell, sweet Prairie-bird! R B.

Delaware and Osage Camp, Tuesday night.

* See chap. xxii., p. 71.

sister, or the child of the Missionary's adoption?"

"Dear Lucy!" replied her brother, with an impressive earnestness, that reassured while it awed her, "there has been so much of the mysterious and merciful working of Providence in the history of Prairie-bird, that I am sure you will forgive me when I ask you to wait a few hours before all is explained to you. Meanwhile, receive her, for these few hours, as a guest; if at the end of them you do not love her as a sister, my prophetic spirit errs widely of its mark."

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"I can distinguish nothing, Edward; there is a mist before my eyes: but it is a mist of love and happiness unspeakable!"

"Courage, dear Evy!" said her brother in a cheering tone; "let them not think that Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, and that her heart regrets the change from the prairie to the scenes of her childhood, and the home of her choice!"

"Edward!" said his sister reproachfully, while a tear started in her eye, and the blood mounted to her temples; then shaking back the dark locks from her glowing cheeks, as if she would thereby shake off the temporary weakness by which she had been overcome, she added, "Remount your horse; we have yet some hundred feet to go; if Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, it shall be Nekimi's fault, and not her own!"

So saying, she shook the loosened rein upon the neck of the fiery steed, which bounding forward with a spring that would have unseated a less practised rider, bore her swiftly to the door, where he stopped, obedient to her delicate hand, and champed, and frothed, and snorted, as if proud alike of his burden and of his own matchless symmetry of form.

Never had her radiant beauty so thrilled through Reginald's every nerve as at this moment, when, lightly touching his proffered arm, she sprang to the ground; her cheek glowing with agitation, and her eye moistened by contending emotions, she interchanged with him one silent look of conscious love, and then turned, with gentle grace, to receive the greeting of Colonel Brandon.

We have before said that he had been far from pleased with the contemplated alliance of his son, and had made up his mind to receive Prairie-bird with cold and studied courtesy, nor to treat her otherwise than as an ordinary guest, until he should have satisfied himself respecting her birth and connexions; but, in spite of himself, these resolutions vanished before the irresistible attractions of her manner and bearing, so that instead of only extending his hand as he had proposed, he imprinted a parental kiss upon her forehead, saying,

"Welcome, heartily and truly welcome to Mooshanne!"

She tried to speak, but she looked on the half-remembered features of Reginald's father, and her collected strength began to fail. At this moment she was greeted by Lucy, whom she already knew to be the chosen of her brother's heart.

"Prairie-bird must learn to love her sister!" whispered she, folding her in an affectionate embrace.

"*Learn*, Lucy!" replied Prairie-bird, whose tears could no longer be controlled. "Learn! can a few years have so changed our faces and our hearts, that Lucy and Evy must now learn to love each other?"

Before the astonished girl could reply, Aunt Mary, darting forward with frantic haste, exclaimed, "What voice is that?" Then catching Prairie-bird by the arm, examined with wild intensity every line of her countenance. As she looked, the tears gathered in her own eyes, her frame trembled with agita

her neck, saying, "'Tis she—'tis my poor brother's long-lost child!"

Lucy's heart told her that it was so indeed: Colonel Brandon was overcome with astonishment; but he read in the looks of Reginald and Ethelston that the lost treasure was restored; and as memory retraced in the features of Prairie-bird those of his attached and lamented friend, he, too, was unmanned; and grasping Ethelston's hand, wrung it with an emotion beyond the power of words.

The news spread like wild-fire throughout the house that Captain Ethelston's sister was returned; and Lucy was obliged to run with all speed to her mother's room to prevent a sudden shock of joy that might affect her weakly nerves. Is it possible to describe, or imagine the transports of the succeeding hour in that happy circle! or the caresses showered upon Prairie-bird! What word would the pen or tongue employ? "Congratulations?" As well might one attempt to represent Niagara by the water poured from a pitcher!

We will trust that hour to the reader's heart, and will suppose it past, and that Lucy, with still tearful eyes, and her arm still round her recovered sister's neck, was leading her from the room where she had just knelt to receive Mrs. Brandon's maternal kiss, when, in passing a half-open door, Lucy said, "Evy, that is your brother's room; but he is not in it, he is still on the lawn."

"Oh! I must look into Edward's room," exclaimed Prairie-bird; and opening the door, she entered, followed by Lucy. A rifle, a fowling-piece, and a fishing-rod stood in one corner; over them were ranged several pair of pistols, and two or three cutlasses, apparently of foreign workmanship; in the opposite corner, near the window, was a globe, by the side of which stood a case filled with naval charts; on the other side of the room was ranged a row of shelves well stored with books, and the writing-table in the centre was covered with papers all neatly tied and docketed, as he had left them at his last departure.

Prairie-bird's eye wandered with a certain degree of interest over all these indications of her brother's habits until it rested upon a small portrait hung over the chimney-piece. It represented a man of middle age and stature, and, although the painting was scarcely above mediocrity as a work of art, the expression of the countenance was strikingly open and benevolent. Prairie-bird gazed upon it until she thought that the mild orbs upon the inanimate canvas returned her affectionate gaze. With clasped hands and beating heart, she stood awhile silent, and then sinking on her knees, without removing her eyes from the object upon which they rested, she murmured, in a whisper scarcely audible, "My Father!"

It was indeed the portrait of his lamented friend that Colonel Brandon had kindly placed in Ethelston's room, a circumstance which had escaped Lucy's memory at the moment of her entering it.

Stooping over her kneeling companion, she kissed her forehead, saying, "Evy, I will leave you for a few minutes to commune with the memory of the honoured dead; you will find me in the vestibule below." So saying, she softly closed the door, and left the room.

In less than a quarter of an hour P[illegible]

cent emotion were still to be observed, she had recovered her composure, and her countenance wore an expression of grateful happiness.

"Come, Evy," said her young hostess, 'I must now show you your own room; the cage is not half pretty enough for so sweet a bird, but it opens upon the flower-garden, so you can escape when you will, and your dear good Paul Müller is your next neighbour."

An exclamation of delight broke from the lips of Prairie-bird as she entered and looked round the tented apartment, and all its little comforts prepared by Lucy's taste and affection. Fortunately, the day was beautiful, and the casement windows being wide open, her eye caught, beyond the flower-garden, a view of the distant mass of forest, with its thousand varied autumnal tints, reposing in the golden light of the declining sun.

"Oh, it is too, too beautiful!" said Prairie-bird, throwing her arms around Lucy's neck; "I can scarcely believe that this is not all a dream!"

"There have indeed been some fairies here, or some such beings as dwell in dreams, Evy," said Lucy, whose eye fell upon the guitar lying on the table, "for I left this room a short time ago, and this instrument was not here then. Who can have brought it?—can you play upon it, Evy?"

"A little," replied Prairie-bird, colouring.

"And see," continued Lucy, "here is a scrap of paper beside it, so soiled and dirty that I should have put it in the fire had I seen it before; do you know the hand-writing, Evy?"

As Lucy said this she looked archly up in her friend's face, now glowing with a rosy blush.

"Well, you need not answer, for methinks I know it myself; may I unfold the paper, and read its contents? What, no answer yet; then I must take your silence for consent."

Thus saying, she opened the paper, while Prairie-bird, blushing still more deeply, glanced at it with longing but half-averted eyes.

"Verses, I declare!" exclaimed Lucy. "Why, Evy, what magic art have you employed to transform my Nimrod brother, the wild huntsman of the west, the tamer of horses, and the slayer of deer, into a poet?"

She then proceeded to read in a voice of deep feeling, the following stanzas, which, although without any pretensions to poetical merit in themselves, found such acceptance with their present warm-hearted and partial judges, that, at the conclusion of their perusal, the two girls fell upon each other's neck, and remained locked in a silent and affectionate embrace.

On overhearing Prairie-bird's Evening Hymn, "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

Yes, hallowed be His Holy Name,
Who formed thee what thou art!
Whose breath inspired the heav'nly flame
Now kindled in thy heart!
Whose love o'erflowing in thy br[illegible]
These vocal rapture[illegible]
Whose angels hover[illegible]
Thou orphan Pr[illegible]
[illegible]throng
[illegible]l-song,
[illegible]ntive strain,
[illegible]d brain
[illegible]ird! R S.
[illegible]ght.

On the following day the family party at Mooshanne were assembled at luncheon under a large tree, on the banks of the Muskingum, from beneath the shade of which the gables and irregular chimneys of the house were seen through occasional openings in Lucy's shrubbery; while the deep river flowed silently onward, bearing away in its tranquil course the early tribute of autumn showered upon it by the light breath of the western wind.

Already had Prairie-bird visited the spot where her father's house had stood, the site of which was only to be recognized by a few heaps of stones and blackened timbers, over which the luxuriant mosses and lichens, with which that region abounds, had long since cast their mantle of green, while a few apple, plum, and peach trees, unprotected by hedge or fence, still showed "where once the garden smiled."

Colonel Brandon had not thought it advisable to rebuild either the house or the offices after their destruction by the savages, but had contented himself with a careful administration of his late friend's property, leaving it to his son Edward to choose a site for his residence at a later period. Neither must it be supposed that our heroine had omitted to pay a morning visit to Nekimi, who now knew her voice, and obeyed her call like an affectionate and faithful dog. As soon as she came to the stable, into which he had been turned without halter or fastening of any kind, the generous animal, after saluting her with a neigh of recognition, rubbed his broad forehead against her shoulder, and playfully nibbled the grains off the head of maize which she held out to him; but even that he did not venture to do until he had acquired a claim to it by holding one of his feet up and pawing with it until she let it rest in her delicate hand. It must assuredly have been by mere accident that Reginald entered while she was thus employed, and reminded her how he had, with prescient hope, foretold this very scene amongst the rocky cliffs of the far distant Andes. Well did Prairie-bird remember the spot, and every syllable of that prophecy; neither did she affect to have forgotten it, but with a sweet blush held out one hand to her lover, while the other still played with the silken tresses of Nekimi's mane.

What a delightful occupation is it to caress a dumb favourite by the side of one beloved, when the words of endearing tenderness lavished on the unconscious pet are the outpourings of a heart sensitively shrinking from addressing them directly to their real object! and if it be true that many a sleek and glossy spaniel has thus received the caress intended for its owner, how much more natural was it that Reginald and Prairie-bird should find pleasure in bestowing their caresses on a noble animal endeared to them by so many associations; for while she remembered how often Nekimi had borne him in the chase and in the fight, he was not likely to forget with how true and unwearied a step the faithful steed had carried his betrothed over many hundred miles of mountain and of prairie; and even now, as her hand rested in his, both by a conscious sympathy thought of Nekimi's former generous lord, and breathed a sigh over War-Eagle's untimely fate.

To return to our party assembled round the luncheon table under the venerable tree. The *first tumult of joy had* subsided, and was succeeded by *a feeling of* more assured happiness, *"a sober certainty of* waking bliss," which pervaded every breast. Aunt Mary contemplated her lovely niece with looks of the fondest affection, recalling in her sweet smile and in the expression of her features the beloved brother, whose loss she had with deep but chastened grief for many years deplored; for a few minutes there was a general silence; one of those pauses in which each member of the party pondered, as if by a common sympathy, on the wonderful events which had led to their reunion Lucy was the first to break it.

"Reginald," said she, "you related to us yester-evening the commencement of your homeward journey, and how the Delaware called 'Stony-heart' was permitted by the Osages to return unhurt to your camp: you must resume the thread of your tale where you left it, and tell us especially how and where you parted from dear Wingenund, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude greater than we can ever pay."

"That do we indeed, Lucy," replied her brother earnestly; "fortunate too is it that deeds of generous self-devotion like those done by Wingenund reward themselves, and that a debt of gratitude to one whom we love is a treasure, not a load upon the breast. You remember how a writer, who used to be a favourite with you, has expressed it:

> 'A grateful mind
> By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
> Indebted and discharged.'"

"What a beautiful thought!" exclaimed Prairie-bird eagerly; "tell me the book wherein I may find it written. Such a lovely flower as that cannot surely grow alone; there must be others of similar beauty near it."

"There are, indeed; fresh, fragrant, and abundant as on a western prairie in June; 'Paradise Lost' is the garden wherein they grow; many of the descriptions contained in it are among the most beautiful in our language; I hope ere long to read them to and with you, dearest," he added in a whisper, intended for her ear alone; "there are some lines descriptive of Eve as she first appeared to Adam, which always seemed to me exaggerated until you taught my eye to see and my heart to feel their truth."

With a deep blush Prairie-bird cast her dark eyes upon the ground, while Reginald continued aloud, again addressing himself to Lucy:

"Our own adventures after we crossed the Platte river are scarcely worth relating; for, although we had a few alarms from wandering parties of Pawnees, Omahaws, and Dahcotahs, our band was too strong and too well armed to fear anything from their open attack; and the ever-watchful care and sagacity of Wingenund left them no chance of surprising us.

"The warlike spirit and experience of his noble brother seemed to have descended, like Elijah's mantle, upon the youth; and feeling the responsibility that attached to him as leader of the party, he allowed himself little rest either by day or by night, setting the watches himself, and visiting them repeatedly at intervals to ascertain that they were on the alert. He always came to our camp-fire in the evening, and I observed that he daily became more interested in the conversation of our worthy friend the Missionary, and more anxious to understand the principles and truths of Christianity; in so doing he was not only following the bent of his own amiable and gentle disposition, but he felt a secret pleasure in the remembrance that he

was fulfilling the last wishes of his dying brother. I dare say Paul Müller would now tell you that he would be thankful indeed if the average of professing Christians understood and practised the precepts of their creed as faithfully as Wingenund."

"That would I in truth, my son," replied the Missionary; "nevertheless I cannot claim the honour of having been the instrument of the conversion of the Delaware youth or his brother; it was effected, under the blessing of Heaven, by the patient, zealous, and affectionate exertion of Prairie-bird."

"Nay, my dear father, you do yourself grievous wrong in so speaking," said Prairie-bird, reproachfully; "and even were it as you say, to whom do I owe everything that I know? whom have I to thank that I was not left in the dark and hapless condition of the females by whom I have so long been surrounded?"

The tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke, and she pressed affectionately to her lips the hand which her adopted father extended to her.

"Yes, my sister speaks only the truth," said Ethelston, addressing the Missionary in a voice of deep emotion; "we all feel how far beyond the power of words we are indebted to you for all that you have done for her, and we only trust that some opportunity may be afforded us of showing a deep, sincere, and permanent gratitude that we are unable to express."

Colonel Brandon, and every one of the family circle, rose as by a common impulse, and one by one confirmed, by a silent pressure of the hand, the sentiment expressed by Ethelston. The venerable man, uncovering his head, and allowing the breeze to waive to and fro his silver locks, looked for a minute upon the kindred group before him, and thus addressed them:

"Think you not, my friends, that this scene, these happy faces, and this happy home, might well reward any degree or duration of earthly toil? But toil there has been none, for the teaching and nurture of this sweet child has been from the first a labour of love; and the only pain or regret that she has ever caused me, is that which I now feel, when I recollect that I must resign her into the hands of her natural guardians, and return to my appointed task, the occasional troubles of which will not any more be sweetened by her presence, nor its vexations be soothed by her affection. Such, however, is the will of Him whom I serve, and far be it from me to repine."

"Nay," interrupted Reginald, eagerly, "you will not leave us yet. After the fatigues and trials of this summer, you will surely give yourself some repose."

"My son, I would gladly dwell awhile in this pleasant and happy abode; but I must not leave Wingenund to contend unaided against the difficulties by which his present path will be beset, the doubts and temptations which may assail him from within, and the sneers or scorn he may experience from the more proud and violent spirits of his tribe."

"There is, however, one service that you have promised to render before you take your departure from Mooshanne. Perhaps there are others here beside myself who will urge you to its faithful performance."

This bold speech threw the whole party into momentary confusion. Prairie-bird, pretending to whisper to the Missionary, hid her blushing face upon his shoulder; the conscious eyes of Ethelston and Lucy met; while Aunt Mary bestowed upon Colonel Brandon one of those knowing smiles with which elderly ladies usually think fit to accompany matrimonial allusions.

The awkwardness was of short duration, for the mutual feelings of the parties betrothed were no secret to any present; and Reginald was not of a disposition to endure unnecessary delays, so he drew Prairie-bird with gentle force towards her brother, and still retaining her hand in his own, he said, "Ethelston, will you, as guardian of your sister, consent to my retaining this fair hand? Beware how you reply, lest I should use my influence against you in a request which you may make to my father."

Had Ethelston been ignorant of his sister's feelings, he might have read them in the expression of her blushing countenance; but being already in full possession of them, and meeting a smile of approval from Colonel Brandon, he placed his sister's hand within that of Reginald, saying, "Take her, Reginald, and be to her as a husband, true, faithful, and affectionate, as you have been to me as a friend."

It will not be supposed that Ethelston waited long for the consent of either her father or brother to his union with Lucy; and Paul Müller agreed to remain at Mooshanne one week, at the end of which time the double ceremony was to take place.

While these interesting arrangements were in progress, the noise of wheels, and the tramp of many horses, announced the approach of a large party; upon which Colonel Brandon, accompanied by the Missionary and Aunt Mary, went to see who the new comers might be, leaving the two young couples to follow at their leisure. The Colonel was not long kept in suspense as to the quality of his visitors, for before reaching the house, he heard the broad accent of David Muir's voice addressing Reginald's attendant.

"Thank ye, thank ye, Maister Parrot," for so did he pronounce the Frenchman's name; "if ye'll just haud the uncanny beast by the head, Jessie can step on the wheel an' be doon in a crack. There, I tauld ye so; it's a' right noo; and Jessie, lass, ye need na' look sae frighted, for your new gown's nae rumpled, an Hairy will tak' the bit parcel into the house for ye."

"Indeed, father, I am not frightened," said Jessie, settling the side curls under her bonnet upon her glowing cheek, and giving the parcel to Henry Gregson, whose hands had for the moment encircled her waist as she jumped from the wheel to the ground. Several vehicles of various descriptions followed, containing the spoils and baggage brought back from the prairies, together with Pierre, Bearskin, and all the members of the party who had accompanied Reginald and Ethelston, and who now came to offer their congratulation on the events attending their safe return; for the story of the wonderful restoration of Ethelston's sister to her family had already spread throughout the neighbourhood, receiving as it went various additions and embellishments from the lovers of the marvellous.

Meanwhile, Jessie Muir had gathered from Monsieur Perrot sufficient information respecting the true state of affairs, to set her mind at rest with respect to Reginald Brandon's intentions; and encouraged by the interest which the Colonel and Lucy had always taken in her prospects, she felt a secret assurance that they would prove powerful auxiliaries in advocating the cause of Harry Gregson, and reconciling her parents to his suit. Neither was she mistaken in her calculation, for while the preparation for the entertainment of the numerous guests was going forward, Colonel Brandon, after a brief consultation with Ethelston, called David Muir aside, and opened to him the subject of the youth's attachment to his daughter.

It is difficult to say whether the surprise, or the wrath of the merchant were the greater on hearing this intelligence, which was not only a death-blow to his own ambitious hopes, but was, in his estimation, an act of unpardonable presumption on the part of young Gregson.

"Colonel, ye're surely no in airnest! it's no possible! Jessie, come here, ye hizzie!" said he, stamping with anger, and raising his voice to a louder pitch.

It happened that Jessie, being engaged in conversation with Monsieur Perrot, did not hear his call, and the Colonel took the opportunity of leading him a little further from the house, and entreating his calm attention to the explanations which he had to give. David walked on in silence, his face still red with anger, and his heart secretly trembling within him when he thought of his next interview with Dame Christie.

The Colonel, who knew both the weak and the good points of his companion's character, dexterously availing himself of both, effected in a few minutes a considerable change in his views and feelings on the subject. He represented to him that Ethelston would now have a house and establishment of his own; that his property was already very considerable, and, with prudent management, would receive gradual augmentation; and that, from his attachment to Gregson, it was his intention to make the honest mate's son the managing agent of his concerns; to facilitate which purpose he, Colonel Brandon, proposed to advance a few thousand dollars, and to establish the young man in a suitable house in Marietta.

"David," continued the Colonel, "you and I have long been acquainted; and I do not think you ever yet knew me to give you counsel likely to injure your welfare or your prospects, and you may trust me that I would not willingly do so now. The young people are attached to each other; they may certainly be separated by force; but their hearts are already united. Harry is an honest, industrious, enterprising lad; he will start in the world with fair prospects; every year will lend him experience; and as you and I are both of us on the wrong side of fifty, we may be very glad a few summers hence to rest from active business, and to have about us those to whom we can entrust our affairs with well-placed confidence."

There was much in this speech that tended to soothe, as well as to convince, the merchant. He was gratified by the familiar and friendly expressions employed by the Colonel, while his shrewd understanding took in at a rapid glance the prospective advantages that might accrue to the agent managing the extensive affairs of the families of Brandon and Ethelston; added to this, he was at heart a fond and affectionate father; and the symptoms of irritation began to disappear from his countenance; yet he scarcely knew how to reply, and before even he meant to speak, the name of his gude-wife escaped from his lips.

"Leave me to manage Dame Christie," said the Colonel, smiling. "Ethelston shall go into Marietta himself, and break the subject to her founding his request upon his regard for the elder Gregson, who has served under him so faithfully ever since his boyhood. Come, my good friend, let us join the party: I do not press you for any reply now; but if you should detect a stolen glance of affection between the young people, do not be angry with Jessie, but think of the day when you first went forth, dressed in your best, to win a smile from Dame Christie."

"Ah, Colonel, ye're speakin' of auld lang syne now!" said the merchant, whose ill-humour was no longer proof against the friendly suggestions of his patron, though he muttered to himself, in an undertone, as they returned towards the house, "I ken now why Maister Hairy was aye sae fond o' the store, when the ither lads were fain to win' awa to hunt in the woods, or to fish in the river! Weel a weel, he's a douce callant, an' the lassie might aiblins gae farther an' fare waur!"

The preparations for the entertainment were still in progress, under the superintendence of Aunt Mary and Monsieur Perrot, the latter having already doffed his travelling attire, and assumed, in his jacket of snowy white, the command of the kitchen, when Harry Gregson, who had opened the Marietta post-bag, put a letter into the hands of Reginald Brandon, which he instantly knew, by the bold, careless handwriting, to be from his uncle Marmaduke. He broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"Shirley Hall, July 15.

"Dear Reginald,

"I have very lately received your letter, announcing your intention of making a hunting excursion in the west, in pursuit of bears, elk, wolves, Indians, and other wild beasts. I hope you'll come safe back, with a score or two of their outlandish brushes. After you left me, I began to feel very uncomfortable, and did not know what was the matter, for I was cold by night, and sulky and out of sorts by day. Parson Williams took me in hand; but though we drank many a bottle of old port together, and played drafts, and attended several road-meetings (which you know was an amusement I had never tried before), it was all no use, and I began to think that I was on a down-hill road to the next world; but, somehow or other, it happened that I dropped in now and then to the parsonage, and whenever I had talked half an hour with Margaret, (you remember Margaret, the parson's daughter,) I felt in a better humour with myself and all the world. So matters went on, until one day I mustered courage to ask her to come up to the hall, and change her name to Shirley. She did so, and your old uncle writes with the halter round his neck. When I married, Perkins came down from

London (the son of my father's solicitor) with a dozen boxes of parchment, in a post-chaise; and made me sign my name at least a score of times; after which I desired him to draw up two more deeds for my pleasure. These were for transferring to yourself, and to your sister, a legacy left me a few years ago by an old relation whom I had never seen, and whose money I did not want. The amount is forty thousand pounds; so there will be twenty thousand pounds a-piece for you, and you may set to work and clear (as you used to call it) an estate as big as the old county of Warwick. I explained what I was about to Meg, telling her, at the same time, that it was a debt that I owed you in conscience, having considered you for so many years as my heir, until her plaguing black eyes made a fool of me, and threatened me with the prospect of brats of my own. For this she pulled my ears twice; first, for calling her Meg instead of Greta, by which name she was known at the parsonage; and secondly, for talking about the brats, a subject which always makes her cheeks redden. But I had no idea of putting the reins into her hand so early in the day, and I told her outright, that the first boy should be called Reginald, to please me; and the second might be called Greto, to please her; and the third might be called Marmaduke, to please the family; on which, without waiting to hear any more, she bolted, and left me master of the field. I have just mentioned this, in order that you, if ever you get into a similar scrape, may know how to behave yourself. Mr. Perkins has completed his deeds of assignment, and has received my instructions to transfer the money to America by the next vessel, in bills upon Messrs. Powell and Co. of Philadelphia; and though I have more than once found you as proud and as straight-laced as a turkey-cock where money was concerned, I know that you dare not, you dog!—I say you dare not refuse, either for yourself or your sister, this token of the affectionate regard of your uncle,

"Marmvduke Shirley."

The flush that came over Reginald's open countenance as he read this epistle from his eccentric but warm-hearted relative, did not escape the watchful eye of Lucy, who was standing near him, and she anxiously inquired whether it contained any unpleasant intelligence.

"Read it, Lucy, and judge for yourself," he replied, while he went to communicate its contents to Colonel Brandon.

We will leave to the reader's imagination the mirth and festivity that reigned at Mooshanne during that happy evening; how Pierre, Baptiste, and Bearskin talked over their adventures of ancient and of recent date; how David Muir's grey eye twinkled when he detected Jessie exchanging a stolen glance with Harry Gregson; how the cheers rang through the forest when the Colonel proposed the health of Prairie-bird, the long-lost child of his dearest friend, the bride of his only son; and how Aunt Mary's sweetmeats and preserves adorned her snowy table-cloth; and how Monsieur Perrot had contrived, as if by magic, to load the hospitable board with every swimming, flying, and running eatable creature to be found in the neighbourhood, dressed in every known variety of form. The healths of Ethelston and Colonel Brandon had not been forgotten; and the latter, observing a shade of melancholy upon his son's brow, said to him aloud, "Reginald, you have not yet given your friends a toast, they claim it of you now."

Thus addressed, Reginald, reading in the dark eyes of his betrothed, feelings kindred to his own, said in a voice of deep and undisguised emotion, "My friends, you will not blame me if I interrupt for a moment the current of your mirth, but it would be doing equal injustice, I am sure, to your feelings and to my own, were we to part without a tribute to the memory of one, now no more, to whose self-devoted heroism Ethelston owes the life of a sister, and I the dearest treasure I possess on earth: The memory of my Indian brother, War-Eagle, late Chief of the Delawares!"

The party rose in silence, every head was uncovered, a tear trembled on the long lashes of Prairie-bird's downcast eye, and Baptiste muttered to himself, yet loud enough to be heard by all present, as he reversed his glass, "Here's to the memory of the boldest hand, the fleetest foot, and the truest heart among the sons of the Lenapé!"

As the day was now drawing to a close, David Muir returned to Marietta, Ethelston having promised to pay a visit to Dame Christie on the following day. The Merchant was so elated by the day's festivities, that he winked his grey twinkling eye at Jessie, forgetting at the moment that she knew nothing of the conversation that had passed between the Colonel and himself; and when the youth in escorting them homeward, warned David of sundry holes and stumps upon the road, thereby enabling them to avoid them, he poked his elbow into Jessie's side, saying, "He's a canny lad, yon Hairy Gregson; what think ye, Jeisse?" She thought that her father was crazy, but she said nothing; and a certain vague sensation of hope came over her, that all was going more smoothly for her wishes than she had dared to expect.

For the ensuing week the whole village of Marietta was enlivened by the preparations for the two-fold wedding at Mooshanne; silks, ribbons, and trinkets without end were bought, and there was not a settlement within fifty miles in which the miraculous return of Reginald Brandon's bride was not the theme of discourse and wonder. Paul Müller became in a few days so universally beloved at Mooshanne, that all the members of the family shared in the regret with which Prairie-bird contemplated his approaching departure; and as they became more intimately acquainted with him, and drew from him the various information with which his mind was stored, they no longer marvelled at the education that he had found means, even in the wilderness, to bestow upon his adopted child. Colonel Brandon was extremely desirous to make him some present in token of the gratitude which he in common with all his family, felt towards the worthy Missionary, and spoke more than once with Reginald on the subject: but the latter stopped him, saying, "My dear father, leave us to manage that, we have entered into a secret conspiracy and must entreat you not to forbid our carrying it into execution."

The Colonel smiled, and promised obedience, knowing that those in whose hands the matter rested, were more familiar with the good man's wants and wishes than he could be himself.

At length the week, long as it may have appeared to Reginald and Ethelston, passed away. The morning which united them to those whom they had respectively loved through so many trials and dangers, arrived; and Paul Müller, having joined the hand of his beloved pupil to the chosen of her heart, prepared to take his leave, when she knelt to him for his blessing. With faltering voice and tearful eyes he gave it; she could not speak, but pointing to a small box that stood upon an adjoining table, with a letter addressed to him beside it, yielded to the gentle force with which her bridegroom drew her from the room.

Taking up the letter, the Missionary read as follows:—

"Oh, my beloved preceptor and father, let me once again thank you for all your goodness and affectionate care! for to you, next to my Father in heaven, do I owe all my present happiness, and all my knowledge of that Saviour who is my everlasting hope and trust. My heart would sink under the thought of being separated from you, if I did not know that you are returning to my dear young brother Wingenund, to guide and assist him in the good path that he has chosen; tell him again and again how dearly we all love him, and that day after day, and night after night, he shall be remembered in his sister's prayers.

"I am sure you will not forsake him, but will give him your advice in teaching his Lenapé brothers, who have laid aside the tomahawk, to cultivate the earth, and to raise corn and other nourishing food for their little ones. You will also continue your favourite and blessed work of spreading among them, and the surrounding tribes, the light of the Gospel. Edward and Reginald tell me that for these objects nearest your heart, gold and silver can be usefully applied, and they desire me to entreat your acceptance of this box containing a thousand dollars, one half to be expended as you may think best for spreading Christianity among our Indian brethren, and the other half in seeds, working-tools, and other things necessary for Wingenund and those who dwell with him.

"I hope you will come and see us at least once in every year, to tell us of the health and welfare of Wingenund. If you can bring him with you, the sight of him will make glad our eyes and hearts.

"Farewell, dear father. Forgive the faults in this letter, remembering, that although I have read so much to you and with you, I have had little practice in writing, and neither Reginald nor Edward will alter or correct one word for me; they both smile and say it will do very well; perhaps it may, for, without it, you know already how dearly you are loved and honoured by your affectionate and ever-grateful,

"PRAIRIE-BIRD."

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

SUPPOSING the gentle reader to have taken *sufficient interest in* Prairie-bird to be desirous *of learning something* of the after fortunes of herself, and those connected with her, we subjoin a letter which accidentally came into our possession, and which appears to have been written a few years subsequent to the date of the conclusion of the preceding tale.

"St. Louis, June 12th, 18—

'DEAR ETHELSTON,

"I have just returned from my long-promised visit to Wingenund, whose village is situated, as you know, not far from the southern banks of the Missouri, about one hundred miles beyond St. Charles's. I found there our respected and venerable friend Paul Müller, whose intercourse with Wingenund and his band has been for some years almost uninterrupted, and productive of the most striking improvement, both in the village itself, and in the character and manners of its inhabitants. Several small settlements of Delawares are in the neighbourhood, all of whom acknowledge Wingenund as their chief; and most of them have availed themselves, more or less, of the teaching of the exemplary Missionary.

"The village is situated on the side of a hill, gently sloping to the south, along the base of which flows a considerable stream, which, after watering the valley below, falls into the Missouri at a distance of a few miles. The huts, or cottages occupied by the Delawares are built chiefly of wood; and each having a garden attached to it, they present a very neat and comfortable appearance. That of Wingenund is larger than the rest, having on one side a compartment reserved entirely for the use of the Missionary; and on the other a large oblong room, in which are held their devotional meetings; the latter serves also the purpose of a school-room for the education of the children. You would be surprised at the progress made by them, and by many of the adults, in reading, as well as in agriculture and other useful craft and I must own that when my eye fell upon their ploughs, hammers, saws, chisels, and other utensils, and then rested on the Bibles, a copy of which is in every dwelling, I felt a deep and gratifying conviction, that our annual present to Wingenund has been productive of blessings, quite beyond our most sanguine expectations.

"I need scarcely tell you, that his reception of me was that of a man welcoming a long-absent brother. He fell on my neck, and held me for some time embraced without speaking; and when he inquired about his dear sister Olitipa, his voice resumed the soft, and almost feminine tones that I formerly noticed in it when he was under the influence of strong emotion. In outward appearance he is much changed since you last saw him, having grown both in breadth and height; indeed, I am not sure whether he is not now almost as fine a specimen of his race as was his noble brother, whom I never can mention or think of without a sign of affectionate regret. Yet in his ordinary bearing, it is evident that Wingenund, from his peaceful habits and avocations, has lost something of that free and fearless air that distinguished his warrior brother. I have learnt, however, from, Baptiste, (who, as you know, insisted upon accompanying me on this expedition,) that the fire of former days is still

dued, not extinguished within him, as you will perceive from the following anecdote, picked up by our friend the Guide from some of his old acquaintance in the village.

"It appears that last autumn a band of Indians who had given up their lands somewhere near the head waters of the Illinois river, and were moving westward for a wider range and better hunting-ground, passed through this district; and seeing the peaceful habits and occupations of the Delawares settled hereabouts, thought that they might be injured and plundered with impunity. They accordingly came one night to a small settlement only a few miles from here, and carried off a few score of horses and cattle, burning at the same time the dwelling of one of the Delawares, and killing a young man who attempted to defend his father's property. A messenger having brought this intelligence to Wingenund, he collected a score of his most trusty followers, and taking care that they were well armed, went upon the trail of the marauders. He soon came up with them; and their numbers being more than double his own, they haughtily refused all parley and redress, telling him that if he did not withdraw his band they would destroy it as they had destroyed the young Delaware and his house on the preceding night.

"This insolent speech uttered by the leader of the party, a powerful and athletic Indian, aroused the indignation of Wingenund; his eyes flashed fire, and his followers saw that the warrior spirit of his early days was rekindled within him. Ordering them to unsling and level their rifles, but not to fire until he gave the word, he drew near to the leader of the party, and in a stern voice desired him to restore the plunder and give up the murderer of the Delaware youth. The reply was a shout of defiance; and a blow levelled at his head, which he parried with his rifle, and with a heavy stroke from its butt, he levelled his antagonist on the ground; then, swift as a panther's spring, he leaped upon the fallen Indian's chest, and held a dagger to his throat.

"Panic-struck by the discomfiture of their leader, and by the resolute and determined attitude of the Delawares, the marauders entreated that his life might be spared, promising to give all the redress required; and on the same day Wingenund returned to his village, bringing with him the recovered horses and cattle, and the Indian charged with the murder, whom he would not allow to be punished according to the Delaware notions of retributive justice, but sent him to be tried at a circuit court, then sitting near St. Charles'. This exploit has completely established our young friend's authority among his people, some of whom were, if the truth must be told, rather disposed to despise the peaceful occupations that he encouraged, and even to hint that his intercourse with the Missionary had quenched all manly spirit within him. You will be surprised to hear that he has married Lita, who was for a long while so deeply attached to his brother; even had she been the wife of the latter, this would have been as conformable to Indian as to ancient Jewish usage. She now speaks English intelligibly, and asked me a thousand questions about Prairie-bird. Fortunately, she had chosen a subject of which I could never weary; and I willingly replied to all her inquiries; when I told her that her former mistress and favourite had now three little ones, the eldest of whom was able to run about from morning till night, and the youngest named Wingenund, after her husband, tears of joy and of awakened remembrance started in her eyes.

"I understood her silent emotion, and loved her for it. How changed is her countenance from the expression it wore when I first saw it! Then it was at one moment wild and sad, like that of a captive pining for freedom; at the next, dark and piercing, like that of the daughter of some haughty chief. Now you may read upon her face the gentle feelings of the placid and contented wife.

"When I left the village, Wingenund accompanied me for many miles; twice he stopped to take leave of me, when some still unsatisfied inquiry respecting your Lucy, or Prairie-bird, rose to his lips, and again he moved on; I can scarcely remember that he uttered any distinct profession of his affection for any of us, and yet I saw that his heart was full; and what a heart it is, dear Edward! fear, and falsehood, and self are all alike strangers there! When at length we parted, he pressed me in silence against his breast, wrung the hand of Baptiste, and turned away with so rapid a stride, that one who knew him not would have thought we had parted in anger.

"On reaching the summit of a hill whence I could command a view of the track that I had followed, I unslung my telescope, and, carefully surveying the prairie to the westward, I could distinguish, at a distance of several miles, Wingenund seated under a stunted oak with his face buried in his hands, and in an attitude of deep dejection. I could scarcely repress a rising tear, for that youth has inherited all the affection that I felt for him to whom I owe my Evelyn's life!

"Harry Gregson and his wife are very comfortably settled here, and appear to be thriving in their worldly concerns. I have been several times to his counting-house, and, from the returns which he showed me, your investments in the fur-trade, as well as in land, seemed to have been most successful.

"Jessie's looks are not quite so youthful as they were when she was the belle of Marietta, but she has the beauty of unfailing good-temper, which we Benedicts prize at a rate unknown to bachelors. Harry has promised to pay us a visit this autumn; he will be delighted with the new house that you have built for his father, since his promotion to the rank of Captain.

"Perrot has found so many 'compatriots' here, that he chatters from morning till night; and his wonderful adventures, by 'flood and field,' both in Europe and the Western Prairies, have rendered him at once the lion and the oracle of the tavern at which we lodge.

"Distribute for me, with impartial justice, a thousand loves among the dear ones in our family circle, and tell Evy that I shall not write again, as I propose to follow my letter in the course of a few days.

"Now and ever your affectionate brother,

"REGINALD BRANDON"

THE END.

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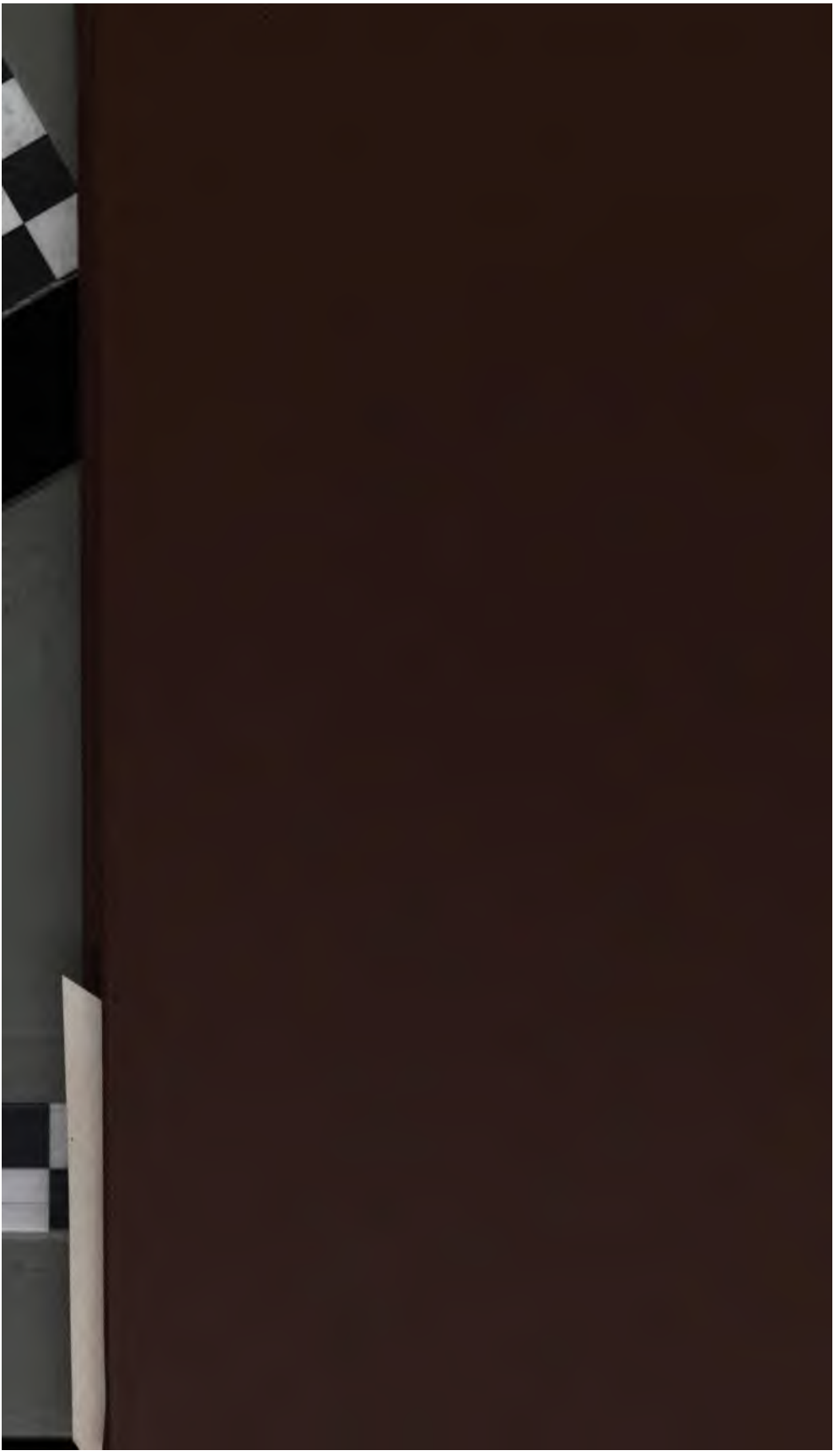
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